

Scotland's Engagement in the European Union

Insights from Third Countries
and Regions

Report Commissioned by the
Scottish Parliament Information Centre for the
Culture, Tourism, Europe and
External Affairs Committee

Scottish Parliament

Anthony Salamone

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The Scottish Centre on European Relations (SCER) is an independent EU think tank, based in Edinburgh, that informs, debates and provides up-to-the-minute, high-quality research and analysis of European Union developments and challenges, with a particular focus on Scotland's EU interests and policies.

About the Author

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Independent analysis. European perspective.

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Executive Summary

This report analyses how third countries and regions engage and influence in the European Union. It considers their EU strategies and engagement in Brussels and in EU member states, assessing innovations in their approaches to European relations and deriving lessons which Scotland could take to develop its own EU strategy and engagement. The report features six case studies of third countries and regions – Norway, North Norway, Geneva, Quebec, the Basque Country and Bavaria. These territories have different relationships with the EU, through the EEA, EFTA, international agreements and EU membership itself, and since they are not principal EU decision-makers they must pursue alternative means to shape the EU's policies. The report is based on interviews with senior officials in the EU institutions, EU permanent representations, third country missions and regional offices, supplemented by further stakeholder discussions.

In their EU engagement, third countries and regions must take account of their formal relationship with the Union, whether with 'decision shaping' rights as an EEA state, participation in the Committee of the Regions as an EU region, or no defined access to EU policy-making. States must complement their diplomacy, and regions their paradiplomacy, with strategies that translate their soft power strengths into narratives that support their objectives and create influence in the EU. In Brussels, third countries and regions advocate their interests at the centre of EU decision-making, interacting with the EU institutions, member states and a multitude of business, NGO and civil society organisations. They work to build influence with EU actors and take advantage of the openness of the EU policy environment to ideas and evidence from EU and non-EU sources. In the member states, third countries and regions pursue their interests in national capitals and cities, where they must decide how to prioritise direct bilateral issues and EU policy questions. Third countries normally have greater resource to operate a larger network than regions, which usually have a smaller, more targeted presence. While the benefits of EU engagement are often intangible, influencing the course of EU decision-making can prove crucial for serving national or regional strategic interests.

Norway is an EEA country and that status provides a degree of structure to its relationship with the EU. While it participates in EEA decision shaping and joint institutions such as the EEA Council, most of Norway's EU engagement is concentrated on building indirect influence in EU policy-making. Norway dedicates significant resource to these efforts as part of its wider foreign policy, and its ministry of foreign affairs is well-funded. Its mission in Brussels is its largest diplomatic representation, and it has an embassy in nearly every EU member state. It engages with the full range of EU actors in Brussels and national capitals, and benefits from particularly strong relationships with the Nordic EU member states. Norway's international profile as a peace-builder and mediator is an important part of its contribution to its bilateral EU relationship, providing additional avenues for engagement. However, Norway is realistic about its inevitably limited influence as a non-member state. While on occasions Norway can shape the edges of EU policies, rarely does it set their tenets.

North Norway pursues the representation of its strategic interests on the Arctic as its primary EU focus. While regions currently have limited powers in Norway, Norwegian counties operate on a regional basis in Brussels through membership-based offices. The North Norway European Office engages extensively with the EU institutions and member states to attempt to shape the EU's Arctic policy and related measures. Its

priorities include advocating the region's point of view on balancing economic development and environmental preservation, and socialising EU actors to the modern Arctic economy and lifestyle. The office also supports its members in accessing EU programmes – and the balance between these roles differs across the Norwegian regional offices. North Norway works closely with its fellow regions and the Norwegian mission in Brussels, forming a 'mini Norway' system that coordinates EU engagement.

Geneva is a principal proponent among the Swiss cantons of a close relationship between Switzerland and the EU, supporting reform of the EU-Swiss institutional structure and the continued free movement of people. Along with its cantonal counterparts, Geneva does not have a distinct external presence in Brussels or elsewhere in Europe. Instead, it contributes to Switzerland's federal EU and foreign policies through the Conference of Cantonal Governments and other domestic avenues. While Geneva has extensive connections with France and particularly its Auvergne-Rhône-Alps region, their cooperation is concentrated on managing their extensive cross-border activity rather than EU policy. Switzerland itself is excluded from EU decision-making, with the exception of Schengen where it has decision-shaping rights, as a country outside both the EU and the EEA.

Quebec focuses its relationship with the EU, as part of an international third country, on building trade, research and innovation partnerships, rather than attempting to shape the EU's economic rules like the non-EU European states. CETA is a major focus for Quebec in its EU work, and the agreement is already deepening Canada-EU relations. Quebec engages strategically with the EU on its priority area of artificial intelligence, interacting with the EU institutions, undertaking ministerial visits to Brussels and participating in EU expert groups, in recognition of the EU's global role as a regulatory power. It maintains an extensive international footprint, with offices in a number of EU member states, focused primarily on building bilateral political, economic and cultural relations. It also engages with EU institutional and member state actors in Ottawa and Montreal. Quebec works collaboratively with Canada on EU affairs, including during the CETA negotiations and on Quebec's research, trade and investment priorities.

The **Basque Country** recognises the importance of European integration to its strategic interests and incorporates EU engagement across its government programme and strategies. It considers itself a constituent of the European project, and recently published a proposal on its vision for the future of Europe. In its EU relations, the Basque Country prioritises efforts to enhance the innovation and competitiveness of its highly industrialised economy. Its delegation office in Brussels brings local stakeholders together in a unified regional presence. The government's trade and investment architecture, including Basque Trade and Investment, takes a holistic approach to internationalisation and concentrates on improving the region's strengths in advanced manufacturing and Industry 4.0. The Basque Country forms strategic partnerships with other EU regions and actors, including through the Vanguard Initiative. It showcases its best practice to the EU institutions, such as in vocational education, becoming recognised at European level as a leader in its fields of excellence and building influence in Brussels.

Bavaria operates at state, federal and European levels to actively shape EU policies, and its approach reflects the substantial internalisation of the EU into domestic politics. Its extensive European policy includes positions on the internal market, euro, external migration and foreign policy, exemplifying the reality that it is possible to articulate detailed perspectives on EU issues even without direct competence on them. In its EU engagement, Bavaria advocates its interests across this wide range of issues, and

pursues its objectives for changing the EU, including increasing the input of regions in EU policy-making and strengthening the application of the principle of subsidiarity. Within the German federal system, Bavaria works with other regions and interacts directly with the federal government to shape Germany's EU policy. In Brussels, Bavaria engages extensively with the EU institutions and has built a profile as an influential convener and regional actor. Drawing on its geography, it concentrates its presence in EU member states in central and eastern Europe, and styles itself as a bridge between east and west.

In practice, third countries and regions generally focus their EU networking, lobbying and influence building in Brussels. Most make a priority of establishing relationships with the European Commission, while also interacting with the EU's large membership of 28 states and the European Parliament. They often gravitate towards those member states with which they already share connections, whether through geography, culture, language or history. Regions also engage indirectly through their national governments, depending on the domestic constitutional context. Where they are able to contribute to the national EU policy and work collaboratively with the state in Brussels, both sides benefit from the productive synergies. In the EU member states, third countries incorporate EU matters into their bilateral relations, to influence EU policies from different national angles, while most regions concentrate on bilateral issues such as trade and investment rather than direct EU affairs. Third countries and regions also work with other state and non-state actors through alliances, associations and partnerships to build their profile in Brussels and achieve policy impact. The most successful states and regions channel their soft power through international profiles, based on expertise, innovations, values or natural characteristics, to simultaneously make themselves unique and offer inspiring solutions to global concerns. Where astutely connected to the EU's ongoing debates, such profiles can create opportunities for cooperation and avenues for influence, sustaining meaningful relations with EU actors over the long term.

The **Principal Conclusions**, situated at the end of this report, set out how Scotland could enhance its EU engagement by learning from and building on the strategies, policies and innovations of these six countries and regions. With the EU's new institutional cycle beginning this autumn, the timing is opportune to reflect on the direction, priorities and strategy of the Union. Although Scotland's future relationship with the EU is unclear, Scotland can and should form part of the debate on the future of Europe. Scotland will equally have to consider its European strategy going forward, despite the uncertainties of Brexit. It should ensure that its EU priorities are clear and focused, and grounded in a vision of the kind of European Union that Scotland wants to see in the years ahead.

1. Introduction

This report analyses how third countries and regions engage and influence in the European Union. It focuses on the work of national and regional governments and considers their EU strategies and their engagement in Brussels and in EU member states. It assesses innovations in their approaches to European relations and derives lessons which Scotland could take to develop its own EU strategy and engagement.

The report features six case studies of third countries and regions – Norway, North Norway, Geneva, Quebec, the Basque Country and Bavaria. These territories have different relationships with the EU. In Europe but outside the EU, Norway and its North Norway region are part of the European Economic Area. Geneva as part of Switzerland is in the European Free Trade Association. Quebec as part of Canada has a relationship with the EU based upon international agreements, including the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. The Basque Country and Bavaria are parts of EU member states and operate both within the EU's structures and through their national governments.

These case studies are intended to be complementary – in the selection of states and regions, and in the forms of engagement, types of relationships and examples of policies and practice which are presented. These countries and regions are all, to a greater or lesser extent, distant from the EU decision-making undertaken by EU member states. They are therefore compelled to pursue alternative means to shape and influence the EU's policies.

The fieldwork for this report was conducted in Brussels and London in May 2019. It consisted of interviews with senior officials in the EU institutions, EU permanent representations, third country missions and regional offices. These interviews were supplemented by discussions with relevant stakeholders in Edinburgh and further afield. The off-the-record insights generated from these conversations are embedded throughout this report.

The European Parliament elections in May began the process leading to the EU's next institutional cycle for 2019-2024, culminating in the entry into office of the new European Commission in November. Accordingly, the timing is opportune to reflect on the direction, priorities and strategy of the Union. Although Scotland's future relationship with the EU is uncertain – as it remains unclear whether the UK will leave the EU or on what basis, Scotland can and should form part of the debate on the future of Europe.

Scotland will equally have to consider its European strategy going forward, despite the uncertainties of Brexit. It should ensure that its EU priorities are clear and focused, and grounded in a vision of the kind of European Union that Scotland wants to see in the years ahead. Drawing from this report, Scotland could enhance its EU engagement by learning from and building on the strategies, policies and innovations of these countries and regions.

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2. Engagement in the European Union

The European Union is a complex supranational entity, currently comprised of 28 member states and 276 regions. Its law-making covers the EU internal market and the range of policy fields where the member states have decided to delegate shared, supporting or exclusive competence to the Union. EU decisions range from major strategic policy choices to individual laws and regulations, whether of a general or technical nature. While EU decision-making involves its core actors – the main EU institutions and the member states, many other actors engage from different positions on the sidelines. The engagement of a third country or region in the EU is inevitably significantly shaped by its formal relationship with the Union.

Third countries with more comprehensive relations with the EU, namely those in the European Economic Area (EEA), have the right to participate in ‘decision shaping’ of EEA-related legislation – although a right to consultation is not a right to decide. Other third countries without such a relationship have generally speaking no formal access to EU decision-making. Third country regions are in a similar position to their states, defined in their EU engagement by their states’ relationship with the EU, though further removed from the state-to-state intergovernmental realm. Member state regions (EU regions) are differently placed, since they are constituents of the Union. They participate in the European Committee of the Regions, the EU institution for sub-state governments, which has an advisory role in some EU policy areas. Depending upon their constitutional arrangements, EU regions may have input into their state’s national positions on EU issues, in addition to their direct engagement with the EU institutions. Where a country or region has limited or no direct access to EU decision-making, it must focus its engagement on building and exercising influence by the indirect means available to it.

Forms of EU Engagement

In considering EU engagement, it is useful to conceptualise three core concepts of international affairs – diplomacy, paradiplomacy and soft power. Diplomacy is often defined as the conduct of peaceful relations in international politics, involving negotiation, dialogue and exchange.¹ Foreign policy and diplomacy have traditionally been considered the preserve of state actors. Indeed, the creation of the term ‘non-state actors’ derives from their status in opposition to states, the habitual agents of international relations. Nevertheless, diplomacy has continued to evolve as global institutions have developed and interconnectedness has increased. Various forms have been added to the lexicon and are now part of governmental strategies, including public diplomacy (direct engagement with citizens, instead of state-to-state relations), digital diplomacy (effective use of internet media and platforms) and cultural diplomacy (deployment of arts, language, values and ideas). Parallel or backchannel diplomacy, involving informal lines of communication and non-state actors such as think tanks and research institutes, also supplements the ordinary work of governments.

The establishment and development of the EU has changed the nature of diplomacy for its member states. Progressive European integration and shared EU institutions mean that a large share of bilateral relations between member states takes place through the EU, and in many respects bringing those states closer together. The EU’s role in the world as a distinct entity has equally continued to grow, with the advents of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service (EEAS), and the evolution of EU foreign, security and defence policies.² While foreign policy remains an important domain of national competence,

cooperation in the EU adds another dimension to member states' diplomatic strategies. Third countries are part of the wider community of states, and they have access to the levers of diplomacy to pursue their interests. Regions are by nature not equipped with the same tools in the traditional sense.

Consequently, paradiplomacy is the quasi-diplomatic engagement by sub-states in international relations.³ It has been described as the 'the external projection of internal competences.'⁴ Indeed, increasing global interconnectedness means that regions often must engage at European and international levels in order to be effective in managing their own domestic responsibilities. European integration has resulted in the formation of an additional political and policy space – the European level – between the national/sub-national and the international. This phenomenon gave rise to Multi-Level Governance, the theoretical concept premised on the notion that 'authority and policy-making influence are shared across multiple levels of government – subnational, national, and supranational'.⁵ The European level has created significant space for EU regions to engage externally, with a degree of in-built legitimacy that did not exist previously. They can interact directly with supranational EU actors, work with other regions on EU policies, or secure EU funding instead of relying on national funding. Non-EU regions engaging on EU affairs operate in the same environment, though with greater limitations on their access and connections to the EU.

Soft power is the ability to persuade actors in the international arena through social and cultural messages.⁶ It can involve the deployment of economic and cultural influence, or notions of values, beliefs and ways of life. Increased global connectivity and progressive digitalisation have made forms of soft power easier to cultivate and propagate, and more important in foreign policy. Indeed, soft power features in both diplomacy and paradiplomacy – and it can serve as an important equaliser for regions in international affairs, by enabling them to establish a strong global profile, even in the absence of access to the tools of traditional foreign policy.

The EU is often observed to be major soft power actor, for instance in its influence on the political and economic development of countries in the European neighbourhood,⁷ including countries that have since joined the EU or are currently candidates. Soft power is therefore intrinsically linked with influence, which is a crucial component of EU engagement generally, but particularly so for third countries and regions since they are not direct participants in EU decision-making. At the same time, state or regional governments do not have a monopoly on soft power – indeed, it normally derives from non-government sources, such as brands, corporations, universities, public figures and intellectuals, and cultural icons and institutions, among many others. For government, the challenge is to combine the relevant constituent elements of the soft power of its country or region into convincing narratives which support its EU and external objectives. The effective deployment of soft power is therefore essential to successfully having influence in the EU. With these core concepts in mind, the parameters of EU engagement in Brussels and in member states are next considered, followed by an outline of the subsequent sections of the report.

Engagement in Brussels

Brussels is the centre of EU decision-making and one of the largest concentrations of diplomatic missions and personnel in the world. For most EU member states, their permanent representation in Brussels is their largest diplomatic mission and incorporates staff from many government departments. Representative offices of EU and non-EU regions are also common in Brussels, with differing aims ranging from securing EU funding, participating in EU programmes and engaging on EU policies.

Third countries from elsewhere in Europe and internationally operate in Brussels because of the EU's global importance as a political and economic actor, and its regulatory and standard-setting power. In only one recent example, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)⁸ has transformed privacy standards globally, particularly in digital commerce, in only its first year of operation. Brussels also hosts numerous European and international business, NGO and civil society organisations. It is unquestionably the principal venue for engaging with the EU.

For third countries and regions, representations in Brussels constitute an essential base from which to advocate territorial interests and to structure a government's EU activity. Since they are outside the core EU decision-making processes, third countries and regions largely concentrate their Brussels efforts on pursuing their policy priorities through building influence with EU actors. This influence can often be intangible and difficult to measure or evidence, but it is essential to having a degree of meaningful input into EU policies. Third countries and regions make use of many different strategies to attempt to influence EU policy-making, ranging from joining associations and networks to collectively shape the policy agenda; to participating in numerous meetings and discussions with policy-makers; to building coalitions of like-minded partners to advocate policy solutions; and to showcasing domestic policy innovations to generate decision-maker interest.

While the main EU institutions and the member states are naturally the primary focus for engagement, third countries and regions also benefit from interacting with the many other groups of actors which operate in the Brussels policy environment. Interest groups, business associations, NGOs, think tanks, research institutes and universities – among many others – form part of the wider EU debate culture. Engaging with all the various policy actors in Brussels can contribute to intelligence gathering and horizon-scanning, and therefore to building influence. The Brussels EU policy environment is also relatively open – decision-makers are often receptive to evidence and points of view from competent actors, including from those outside the EU. Indeed, many of these approaches for engagement and influence are available to EU and non-EU states, regions and non-state actors.

Engagement in EU Member States

While Brussels constitutes the most important locus for EU policy-making, bilateral relations with EU member states in their national capitals can also prove an important part of EU engagement. As part of its external affairs policy, a third country or region must decide in which EU countries to have a representation, keeping in mind the potential costs involved and its overall international footprint. This process includes determining where to place a representation in a country (in the national capital or elsewhere) and assigning neighbouring countries to a representation's jurisdiction to cover gaps in local presence. Here, the difference between states and regions is more apparent. Third countries are equipped with an independent foreign policy, a state budget and a full diplomatic network. Accordingly, they usually have greater capacity to maintain a larger and more active diplomatic footprint in the EU member states. Regions are more constrained, depending on their powers, budget, ambitions and relationship with their state government. As a result, they often operate fewer representations with more targeted remits.

With respect to EU affairs, the principal question for representations is their main focus of bilateral relations – whether to develop relations on direct bilateral issues or to engage directly or indirectly on EU policies and policy-making. Given the prevalence of EU law within the domestic systems of the EU member states, indirect engagement

on EU matters is bound to arise in some form, but governments may instead prioritise bilateral political relations, economic and trade links, and cultural connections. Third countries have greater scope to engage locally in EU member states on EU policy, given their autonomy and diplomatic networks, and to triangulate between their own capital, EU national capitals and Brussels. Where they have representations in EU member states, regions often focus on trade and investment, funding, partnerships and collaborations over EU policy formation. State and regional representations alike normally include or work with their trade and investment agencies.

In conducting a European bilateral relationship, identifying scope for partnerships and potential niche areas for cooperation are important foundational tasks. Opportunities can derive from implementing EU or national engagement strategies, or from harnessing more organic evolutions on the ground. Existing and emerging bilateral areas of cooperation can have or can develop EU dimensions, enhancing their value and connecting back to engagement on EU policy-making. It is equally worth keeping in mind that EU member states are present and accessible in Brussels, not just in their own capitals. In fact, state actors in their national capital will rely on their officials based in Brussels for intelligence, analysis and advice. While a third country or region can find it useful to develop both bilateral angles – in Brussels and in member states – to engage on EU decision-making, it is important not to underestimate what can be achieved in Brussels.

As with diplomacy generally, the benefits of EU engagement are often intangible and difficult to quantify. Influencing the course of EU policies and decision-making can prove crucial for serving national or regional strategic interests, but such outcomes are normally challenging to evidence. The most productive EU engagement combines good relationships, accurate intelligence, timely responses and convincing arguments. Interacting successfully with the EU is essential for any government, given that the EU's laws and policies directly and indirectly affect the whole of Europe, whether or not a country or region is part of the Union.

Structure of the Report

Engagement in the EU as a third country or region requires investment, and influence in EU policy-making can often be limited. However, as will be explored, it is possible to exercise some influence through multiple different approaches. In order to be most successful, third countries and regions require a clear set of EU priorities. The following six case studies – considering Norway, North Norway, Geneva, Quebec, the Basque Country and Bavaria – explore their EU strategies and priorities, engagement in Brussels, engagement in EU member states and notable engagement innovations. Four of the six case study territories are outside the EU. One case study is a state, and the other five are regions. In their presentation, the case studies do not follow a formulaic structure and instead feature different themes and characteristics, in order to be complementary and to highlight various aspects of EU engagement. Each case concludes with a summary point underlining the essence of its EU relations. After the case studies, an analytical review of their engagement experiences is undertaken to distil main approaches and strategies, followed by the principal conclusions of this report for Scotland on EU engagement.

3. Norway

A small northern European state outside of the EU, Norway structures its relationship with the Union through membership of the European Economic Area.⁹ It is therefore an 'EEA country' – distinguishing it from other third countries in its relative closeness to the EU. Through the EEA Agreement,¹⁰ it participates in most of the EU's internal market and its associated four freedoms, implementing a significant amount of EU law domestically over which it mostly has little formal say.¹¹ While debate on this state of affairs recurs in national politics, Norway is unlikely to seek major change to its EU relationship in the foreseeable future.¹² Instead, the Norwegian government frames its EU engagement as part of its overall foreign policy and views the EU from the prism of international relations. Norway spends substantial attention and resource on engaging with the EU as an external actor, working to influence EU decision-making processes from its position on the margins.

Priorities for Norway's EU Relationship

By virtue of its participation in the EEA, Norway benefits from a substantial degree of institutionalisation of its relations with the EU. EEA membership facilitates its participation in EU programmes, which it pays to access, such as Horizon 2020, Creative Europe and Erasmus Plus. While Norway does not have a formal place in EU decision-making like EU member states, it is accorded a 'decision shaping' role on matters connected to the EEA Agreement.¹³ Much of EU legislation overall is related to the internal market and determined to be 'EEA relevant', so the scope for this participation in terms of policy fields is wide. Norway can express its views through EEA structures such as the EEA Council,¹⁴ the biannual ministerial meeting bringing together EEA countries and EU institutions. It also participates in some EU structures, such as European Commission expert groups and working groups. However, Norway has no guarantee of ultimate influence, since it is not an EU decision-maker.

Despite the formalities of the EEA, relations with the EU are complex. Given its relatively small size and position on the outside, Norway cannot endeavour to meaningfully influence every aspect of EU legislation. The country therefore requires a clear strategy to manage this crucial external relationship. The Norwegian government currently organises its EU engagement through a two-part approach. Its multiannual strategy – the current version of which is *Norway in Europe: The Norwegian Government's Strategy for Cooperation with the EU 2018–2021*¹⁵ – sets core objectives. The strategy is supplemented by an annual action plan¹⁶ to develop those objectives in practice. In broad terms, Norway formulates its EU relations in three main pillars – (1) the EEA, (2) the Schengen area and (3) foreign policy (that is, externally to both Norway and the EU). Beyond the EEA as a whole, priorities for Norway in its EU relationship include energy, fisheries, the Arctic and foreign policy.

To succeed, this approach to EU engagement requires significant input from all levels of government. The current prime minister, Erna Solberg, dedicates substantial time to Norway's EU relationship, in common with her predecessors, visiting Brussels regularly to hold meetings with a range of actors.¹⁷ The ministry of foreign affairs is well-funded and resourced, with its foreign policy and administration budget set at NOK 7.54 billion (£685 million) for 2019.¹⁸ When EU actors offer Norway opportunities for cooperation, ask for contributions or extend invitations to meetings, the government very often accepts and delivers. In order to exercise greater influence in the EU's processes, Norway invests in building relationships with key stakeholders.

Norway equally makes use of its diplomatic network to directly and indirectly support its EU engagement. The country currently operates 88 diplomatic missions around the world, more than other European countries its size. By comparison, Denmark has 74¹⁹ and Ireland has 73 missions²⁰ (though it is currently expanding its diplomatic presence under the *Global Ireland* strategy).²¹ This diplomatic footprint facilitates direct contact in EU national capitals, an important dimension in building and exercising influence for a country in Norway's position. This extensive reach equally gives Norway greater networking capacity to deliver on international goals it shares with the EU. The country also contributes its expertise to support the EU's work, particularly on foreign policy with the European External Action Service.

Although Norway's EU relationship presents challenges at home, including the democratic deficit involved in the EEA, the model is considered by both sides to work relatively well for the country, given its size and history. As a small open economy, Norway recognises the benefits of a European response to common challenges and actively supports a successful EU internal market. The possibility of Brexit introduces a level of uncertainty for Norway and other third countries in their relations with the EU. For as long as the future EU-UK relationship is undefined, the risk remains that the UK could ultimately secure more favourable non-member terms, which could disadvantage Norway. The concern also exists among Norwegian actors that the UK might displace Norway as an external partner for the EU on foreign policy, given the UK's greater international weight.

Norwegian Engagement in Brussels

The Norwegian mission to the EU is the country's largest diplomatic mission.²² It comprises around 50 staff, including specialists from different Norwegian government departments. Such clustering is the approach taken by EU member states in their permanent representations, and it is notable that Norway has followed suit. Its Norway House premises,²³ opposite the European Commission's Berlaymont headquarters, have been developed into a notable venue for external events, intended to raise the country's overall profile in Brussels. Many other Norwegian actors engage in Brussels besides the government. Norwegian businesses and civil society participate in European associations or have their own presence. Norwegian universities and the Research Council of Norway have offices in Brussels, as do Norwegian regions. The Norwegian mission and the Norwegian regional offices work together closely, much more so than for neighbouring Nordic EU member states.

Since Norway has very limited direct input into EU policy-making, beyond the modest formal structures of the EEA, it focuses most of its efforts in Brussels on indirect engagement and influence. This approach requires a significant amount of time and resource to be dedicated to information gathering. For EU meetings on policy and decision-making, the Norwegian mission must learn their happenings, timings and agendas, determine their relevance and value, and find out their outcomes after the fact. On occasions where it proves possible for Norwegian officials to attend, they must judge whether it is worthwhile and how to maximise that opportunity. Norway has the resource to send staff from Oslo, from the ministry of foreign affairs or other government departments, to attend EU meetings – capacity which the other EEA countries do not share. The volume of EU business is high and rigorous prioritisation must be applied in order to engage effectively.

Norwegian officials constantly monitor EU activity for new developments and proposals, to identify trends, challenge and opportunities. Outside formal EU decision-making, the most effective period for influence is the early policy stages – often before

a formal legislative proposal is made by the European Commission. Many EU policy actors will be receptive to good arguments and ideas, particularly in the beginning of the policy process, even from a non-member state. Here, the value of astute and well-informed Norwegian officials engaging adroitly is self-explanatory. Norway's status as an EEA country also gives it greater legitimacy, in the view of EU actors, to contribute indirectly to EU policy formation.

Where a concern arises in the later stages of policy development, the best strategy for Norway often lies in working with those EU member states whose interests, on that policy question, are similar to its own. Such alignment can come through existing shared interests between the countries or from proactive engagement by Norway to frame interests as commonalities. Arriving at a situation where EU member state(s) advocate a position within the EU decision-making process, which fits with Norway's interests, is an ideal success of indirect influence. Admittedly, however, this avenue is dependent upon those particular member states – ultimately, Norway must adapt to their eventual actions and decisions.

As a member of the Schengen area, Norway exercises its most substantive formal role in EU decision shaping in the policy fields of Schengen. It has the right to participate, but not vote, in the 'mixed committee' format – bringing together the EU member states and non-EU Schengen countries – of the Justice and Home Affairs Council. Mixed committee formats also take place on the margins of meetings of the Committee of the Permanent Representatives (COREPER), the EU Council's main preparatory body. Justice and home affairs fall under COREPER II, meaning that these meetings are held at permanent representative/ambassador level.²⁴ Norway plays an active role in Schengen debates, attends meetings and works together in groups with EU member states on related policy questions. While the EU member states take the final decisions, agreements reached in the mixed committee are normally approved by them. Schengen is therefore unique in being the only EU sphere in which Norway exercises a near-member state role.

Since Norway is a non-EU country, its formal EU interlocutor generally speaking is the European External Action Service, and in particular its Western Europe division.²⁵ The Norwegian government has relations with the EEAS, both in Brussels and through the EU Delegation to Norway in Oslo. The Norwegian mission has strong relationships directly with the European Commission, across its priority policy areas. Dialogues with Commission officials are often a useful means of acquiring relevant information on EU policy-making which might otherwise only be available to member states. The EU Council is a relative weak point in Norway's EU engagement, due to its intergovernmental nature. The Council is supported by around 150 working groups, to which Norway does not normally have access. The Norwegian mission must prioritise following the work of certain groups, networking with the Council secretariat and engaging with the member states.

In the European Parliament, Norway's objective is to establish relationships across the parliamentary leadership, party groups, committees and secretariat. Uniquely for a third country, the Norwegian parliament has its own office within the European Parliament buildings in Brussels, through which it can foster direct interparliamentary relations.²⁶ Norwegian political parties are also members of European political parties, and senior Norwegian politicians have the opportunity to interact with their counterparts, including in the centre-right European People's Party and centre-left Party of European Socialists. While Norwegians do not participate in the EU business of their European parties, such as the selection of *Spitzenkandidaten* for European Commission president connected to the European Parliament elections, they still form

part of the wider EU political system, and this integration fosters relationships with EU political leaders.

Beyond political engagement with EU actors, Norway is also active to ensure its interests through the institutions of the EEA Agreement. Under the EEA's 'two-pillar' system, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is equipped with institutions for the EEA EFTA states which broadly match the EU institutions. In particular, the EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) is considered comparable to the European Commission – in respect of the monitoring and enforcement of EU law. One notable instance of Norway's efforts in this regard is its successful application to the ESA for approval of its system of regionally differentiated social security contributions.²⁷ The system is designed to mitigate depopulation of the country's most sparsely populated areas, especially those northernmost, through providing a variable geographically-based discount on employer social security dues, to lower the cost of employment.²⁸ Although the system was found to constitute state aid, the ESA has, mostly recent in 2014²⁹ and 2017,³⁰ judged it to be compatible with the EEA Agreement. Norwegian actors consider this approval significant and evidence of the EEA working as intended.

Norway is generally considered by EU actors in Brussels to be notably competent in its EU engagement. It is frequently 'in the corridors' near decision-making, while remaining outside the EU. While it is possible to have indirect influence on EU policy as a third country, the degree and circumstances of that influence can be highly variable. The task requires significant dedication of resources and often a long-term perspective. Good relationships and networks matter, though even at its best Norway is more likely to succeed in shaping the edges of EU policy rather than defining its key tenets. From its current position, Norway can never be the equal of an EU member state nor a full participant in EU policy-making. Instead, it must accept its position as an interested and active observer as the price of its EEA relationship with the EU.

Relations with Nordic EU States

While Norway and Iceland remain outside the EU, the other Nordic states – Denmark, Finland and Sweden – are EU members. The Nordic countries share deep political, cultural and geographic links, and in some dimensions Nordic cooperation predates European integration. It is logical then both that Norway's closest EU bilateral relationships are with these three countries, and that it looks to engage with them extensively on EU affairs. Denmark, Finland and Sweden themselves work very closely together in the EU. They share many priorities and perspectives, with some clear differences such as the euro – Finland is a euro member, Denmark is in the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) II and Sweden remains completely outside. In Brussels, officials from their permanent representations hold regular meetings across all issues. They exchange a significant amount of EU information and enjoy a high degree of established trust.

In practice, Norway also has deep bilateral and collective relationships with the Nordic EU states. As a result of these relationships, Norwegian actors are able to access information and to have a degree of influence in the intergovernmental sphere, which goes beyond Norway's formal status as an EEA country. In Brussels, officials from the Nordic EU states regularly share internal EU information with Norwegian officials. This information includes meeting dates and agendas, summaries and readouts, and draft papers and reports. For instance, Norwegians are sometimes given the detailed briefings of the proceedings of EU Council meetings, written for the member states. The sharing of this information is informal and unstructured, and often determined in large part by the personal relationships between officials.

Although these relationships are well-rooted and mutual, Norway as the outsider is unsurprisingly the driving force behind them. In Brussels, Norwegian officials meet regularly with Nordic EU colleagues. Sectoral counterparts will meet with varying frequency, depending on developments and personalities. More structured meetings are supplemented by frequent informal conversations and briefings. However, the exchange of information is not a one-way street. Since Norway is 'outside the room' of most EU meetings, its officials spend a large amount of time gathering information from various alternative sources. Consequently, they collect intelligence which their Nordic EU partners have missed, and which those partners find valuable. Denmark, Finland and Sweden, despite their affinity to Norway, nevertheless prioritise their own interests where they are divergent. Their connection with Norway, and the related information and access which they provide it, is unusual for a non-EU member state.

Norway and its Nordic EU neighbours engage on EU affairs not only in Brussels, but in each of their capitals. Officials across embassies, ministries of foreign affairs and various government departments of the countries know one another, share EU information and discuss EU priorities. In Oslo, for instance, meetings on EU matters between Norway, Sweden and Denmark take place regularly. On some occasions, the EU Delegation to Norway is also invited to attend. Across all arenas, cooperation among Norwegian and Nordic EU civil servants is high. At the political level, exchange is also often productive, though European party affiliations sometimes give rise to political rivalries. The Nordic Council provides another forum in which leaders and officials from these countries meet. While the agenda is focused on Nordic cooperation instead of EU affairs, the various meetings and contacts nevertheless provide opportunities to build relationships and informally discuss EU issues. Consequently, Norway's relations with these EU members are an invaluable dimension of its overall EU engagement.

Bilateral relations with all EU member states are another important part of Norway's EU activity. Norway has an embassy in 23 EU member states (with the exceptions of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia),³¹ through which it conducts relations with national governments directly in their capitals. Most EU member states also have an embassy in Oslo, providing further scope for engagement. For greatest influence, Norway must foster relationships with major EU members such as France and Germany. It can equally build relationships on the basis of shared characteristics, such as its northern European geography, small state size or would-be net contributor status. Norway contributes under the EEA Agreement to cohesion spending in 15 EU member states,³² through the EEA Grants and Norway Grants, serving as a basis for partnerships.³³ In its EU bilateral relationships, Norway covers both direct bilateral issues, such as joint work in international development, and EU issues, such as the Schengen area.

International Profile: Peace-Builder

Norway maintains a prominent international profile relative to its size. It has built a strong global diplomatic network and is a major international aid donor, as the eleventh largest global contributor of net ODA by US dollars in 2017.³⁴ Norwegians occupy a number of senior posts in international organisations, particularly in the United Nations.³⁵ The country has cultivated a general reputation for good global citizenship. Perhaps Norway's most visible international role is in conflict resolution as an international peace-builder and mediator. A collection of factors, including those above, has enabled it to achieve a high global profile in this area. Norway is a relatively recent independent state (since 1905) and does not have the imperial past of many of

its European neighbours. It hosts the world-famous Nobel Peace Prize, alongside high-level dialogues such as the Oslo Forum.³⁶ Its capital features prominent related think tanks and research organisations, such as the Peace Research Institute Oslo. Norway is seen internationally as an honest broker, and is said by EU actors to have the ‘cultural confidence’ to fulfil this mediator function.

In its peace-builder role, Norway has been involved in attempting to resolve past and present conflicts ranging from those in Kosovo, Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland and Somalia to Colombia, Palestine and the Iran nuclear deal. Taking on this role equally brings challenges, such as the reputational risk associated with failed resolution efforts. For instance, its attempts at facilitating peace in Sri Lanka were prominently unsuccessful, although the circumstances were not solely of Norway’s making.³⁷ Moreover, while exercising an important role, Norway is not always the decisive mediator. Whereas the Norwegian efforts often take the public spotlight, the world’s major powers will in many cases conduct the decisive negotiations behind the scenes. In international politics, Norway is also not a ‘neutral’ country – it is a founding member of NATO – yet it has been able to successfully distinguish between its global mediator role and its own defence and security.

This international profile is an important part of Norway’s EU relationship. While foreign policy is not part of the EEA Agreement, Norway and the EU cooperate extensively in foreign, security and defence policies. Norway also works with the EU and its member states in international organisations, on topics such as reform of the UN. Norway’s global peace-builder status represents an area of expertise where it can bring a distinctive contribution to the EU. In international conflict situations, Norway can perform a mediator role which the EU cannot – for instance, by being politically able to speak with parties to a conflict with which individual EU member states have difficult relations. In that regard, not being part of the EU, or connected to the imperial histories of some member states, is part of Norway’s advantage.

Norway’s contributions and expertise in peace-building are often highly valued by EU actors, and therefore a key component of what the country brings to the table in its bilateral EU relationship. It provides the Norwegian government with opportunities to engage with senior EU figures, such as through hosting them at the Oslo Forum or jointly participating in related UN initiatives. For instance, prime minister Erna Solberg built a relationship with outgoing EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini through Norway’s peace-building work.³⁸ This specialised niche therefore accomplishes multiple objectives for Norway – it contributes to international peace, constitutes a strong contribution to its EU relationship and increases its engagement with EU actors.

Summary Point: Norway

In practice, Norway exercises only modest influence in EU policy-making. While its participation in the EEA gives it greater structure and access to the EU than other third countries, even equipped with a clear EU strategy Norway must nevertheless invest significant resources in EU engagement for often variable or limited returns.

4. North Norway

Local government in Norway is principally organised around counties and their constituent municipalities. A process of reform is currently under way to consolidate the number of both,³⁹ and to transfer additional powers from the centre to the merged counties.⁴⁰ Norway is also divided into five regions, for mainly historical purposes. When it comes to EU affairs, the counties work together largely along these regional lines. Every Norwegian region – North, Mid, West, South and Oslo – has an office in Brussels (western Norway has two: West and Stavanger), and they work closely with each other and the Norwegian Mission to the EU. In that regard, these regions do not have extensive external affairs policies or a wider international footprint – their main external engagement is focused on the EU, through the framework of Norway's membership of the EEA. Their Brussels offices are structured as membership organisations, comprised of public and private sector actors from each region.

North Norway European Office

North Norway consists of the three northernmost counties of Nordland, Troms and Finnmark. The counties established the North Norway European Office in 2005, and the office includes six partners from the region, including its largest city Trømsø, the Arctic University of Norway and Nord University.⁴¹ In Brussels, most of the Norwegian regional offices are purposely located in buildings that also house EU regional offices – particularly those from the Nordic EU states of Denmark, Finland and Sweden – to make it easier to foster connections with EU partners. Two of the offices, West Norway and South Norway, are located inside Norway House. The North Norway office operates on the basis of a four-year strategy,⁴² supplemented by an annual list of priorities. It also concludes individual partner agreements with its six partners, to give focus and direction to their membership.

Its strategy is based on two main objectives: (1) to promote North Norway's interests to the EU and (2) to make the most of opportunities to participate in EU programmes and build partnerships under Norway's EU relationship. For the first objective, the office undertakes a central role as an advocate for North Norway in the EU. This work focuses predominantly on the region's strong Arctic profile, its sparse population and its peripherality – and the realities, challenges and opportunities associated with those characteristics. For the second objective, the office engages with its partners on EU programmes, partnerships and related funding in which Norway participates through the EEA, including Horizon 2020 and Creative Europe. Research and innovation connected with its two universities, alongside energy, the environment, natural resources and transport, are areas of focus. These efforts include information gathering in Brussels on programmes and networks, and increasing awareness locally in the region of the opportunities available.

Norwegian Cooperation in Brussels

North Norway engages extensively with the Norwegian Mission to the EU and the other Norwegian European regional offices. They are all well connected to each other and, along with other Norwegian actors, constitute a sizeable 'mini Norway' in Brussels. It is often easier for these regions and other Norwegian partners to collaborate in Brussels than might be the case in Norway, in part due to their regular contact and proximity in the city. The Norwegian mission and regional offices hold regular meetings to share agendas and information and to work together. They

informally operate a complementary approach – the Norwegian mission focuses on macro-level issues and its main priorities, and the regions concentrate on their sectoral-level interests. By working cooperatively together, they cover more collective ground for Norway on EU affairs. North Norway and the other regions supplement these meetings with frequent discussions with the diplomatic mission and each other. The regional offices hold their own joint meetings and organise two large annual conferences together in Brussels.

The Norwegian regions work together collaboratively, for instance on making the case to the Norwegian government for continued participation in EU programmes. Norway must subscribe to individual programmes and pay for access, for the length of a multiannual financial framework (MFF). With the next MFF for 2021-2027 currently under negotiation, Norway will need to decide its programme subscriptions for this cycle – whether to continue with its current choices or to make changes. Since the Norwegian regions value their participation in current programmes, they decided to collectively generate a body of evidence supporting continued participation. Each regional office undertook a case study of a particular EU programme in Norway, including Creative Europe, the LIFE environment and climate programme, and Digital Europe, gathering together programme achievements and stakeholder interests. This evidence was presented to the Norwegian mission and the Norwegian government as a strong basis for Norway renewing its participation in those EU programmes.

Engaging on EU Arctic Policy

North Norway's main European policy priority is the EU's Arctic policy.⁴³ As a northernmost region, it faces a challenging natural environment compounded by difficult geopolitics. Its objective is to build among EU actors what it considers to be a more accurate understanding of the realities of the Arctic, its economy and environment.⁴⁴ For North Norway, this awareness-building focuses on advocating the need for a more appropriate balance between environmental preservation and economic development. The EU imports resources from North Norway and other parts of the Arctic, including minerals, fisheries, energy and oil and gas. At the same time, the EU's policies, from North Norway's perspective, were in the past unrealistically weighted towards 'preserving the Arctic'. The region feels however that the EU's most recent Arctic policy communication from 2016⁴⁵ strikes a better balance, and Norwegian and EU actors take the view that North Norway's efforts had some influence in shifting the EU's position.

The regional office engages with a range of EU actors to increase knowledge of Norway, North Norway and the Arctic. It organises annual study visits of relevant MEPs and advisors to North Norway, to demonstrate the modern Arctic economy and the region's emphasis on moving to a circular economy – and to demystify preconceptions about the Arctic and its rurality. The office engages with the European Commission and the European External Action Service, including through the latter's Arctic Stakeholder Forum.⁴⁶ However, turnover of EU personnel covering the Arctic has proven high, so North Norway proactively engages with those actors to build renewed networks and knowledge of its interests.

North Norway also works collaboratively with regions that share similar characteristics and challenges. It is a partner in the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA),⁴⁷ a network of the northern regions of Norway, Sweden and Finland, which aims to promote their shared interests in the EU. The NSPA allows North Norway, the only non-EU region in the group, to engage closely with its Nordic EU neighbours and to build coalitions with EU regions, particularly on northern and Arctic issues.⁴⁸ Its

relationships with Finland and Sweden, at regional and national levels, are often its most important avenues for engaging with EU member states and accessing the EU's policy processes. Actors in the EU institutions are also often receptive to the expertise and direct knowledge on Arctic issues which North Norway and its counterparts bring to the table. The European Commission in particular will to some degree listen to the views and concerns of regions, as experts on the ground, more than third country states – providing opportunities for North Norway to leverage its expertise on the Arctic into indirect influence on the EU's Arctic policy.

Summary Point: North Norway

The North Norway European Office prioritises articulating its regional interests on EU Arctic policy, engaging directly with EU actors and working together with fellow northernmost regions in the EU. Given the Arctic's importance to the EU, from natural resources to geopolitics, North Norway can leverage its expertise and perspective to interface with ongoing EU debates on the Arctic.

5. Geneva

Geneva, formally the Republic and Canton of Geneva, is the westernmost canton of Switzerland, largely surrounded by France. The canton is francophone and well-known for hosting United Nations bodies and other international organisations. As part of the Swiss confederation, Geneva has wide-ranging competence over its internal affairs and the right to be consulted on external affairs where its powers or direct interests are concerned. Switzerland is a member of the European Free Trade Association, but not the European Economic Area, and its relationship with the EU is based on a complicated patchwork of sectoral bilateral agreements.⁴⁹ While it participates in large parts of the four freedoms of the EU's internal market and in the Schengen area, outside of the EU and EEA, Switzerland must work even harder to influence the EU. In practice, Geneva's engagement with the EU is predominantly indirect and through the Swiss government.

Switzerland's EU Relationship

The current EU-Swiss relationship developed over time, particularly following popular rejection of EEA membership in 1992,⁵⁰ and was not the product of careful design. The bilateral agreements mostly do not have provisions to incorporate future changes to EU law, like in the EEA Agreement, so changes must be negotiated – leading to a constant state of negotiation. While many of the agreements are freestanding, they are equally linked by guillotine clauses – if obligations are not fulfilled under one agreement, it falls along with multiple others. Switzerland's access to the internal market or EU programmes can consequently be suspended on relatively short notice, if it does not uphold its commitments. In recent years, the free movement of people has proven controversial in Switzerland, as evidenced through its narrowly successful 2014 referendum on controlling migration.⁵¹

The EU has long been dissatisfied with this sectoral and fragmented approach,⁵² and in the aftermath of the immigration referendum negotiations began to develop an institutional framework to provide greater uniformity to its relations with Switzerland. These negotiations concluded in December 2018, though the Swiss Federal Council decided to undertake further public consultation rather than endorse the agreement.⁵³ While the EU has made clear its view that the negotiated text is final,⁵⁴ the Federal Council requested further changes in June 2019.⁵⁵ It remains to be seen what resolution might be found and the implications for Switzerland. Brexit has also had a significant impact on the reform of the EU-Swiss relationship. The EU does not want to create a precedent of a third country having more favourable access to its internal market or programmes without equivalent responsibilities. Despite Switzerland's prevarications on the new institutional framework, the EU as the much larger economic and political actor is in a stronger position, and any outcome will inevitably involve Switzerland adapting to the EU rather than the other way around.

Genevan External Affairs Policy

Geneva is generally strongly supportive of a close relationship between Switzerland and the EU. In the 2014 immigration referendum, the canton rejected the proposal to limit the free movement of people by 61% to 39%.⁵⁶ In 1992, it voted by 78% to 22% in favour of Switzerland joining the EEA.⁵⁷ The Genevan cantonal government (the Council of State) manages its EU and international affairs through the Directorate General for External Relations, under the Presidential Department.⁵⁸ The council

produces an external affairs action plan for each legislative period.⁵⁹ On the EU, the strategy outlines the council's desire for the new EU-Swiss institutional framework agreement to be concluded in the near future, and articulates its strong support for the continued free movement of people under the EU's internal market. As the host of many UN agencies and international organisations, the strategy also places significant emphasis on developing this 'International Geneva.'

The canton benefits from a high degree of interconnectedness with France, particularly with the bordering Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. In addition to their geographical proximity, they share the same language and strong cultural links, all of which facilitate cross-border economic activity, employment and tourism. Around 80,000 cross-border workers, mostly from France, commute into Geneva – a quarter of all cross-border workers into Switzerland and the highest of any canton.⁶⁰ This close relationship gives rise to many local transborder matters. Cantons have the right to conclude agreements with neighbouring states on their areas of competence, provided that they do not impact upon federal interests or policy. Geneva has a number of such agreements with Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (and its predecessor Rhône-Alpes).⁶¹ They also conduct frequent dialogue and exchanges at official and political levels. In that regard, France is the only principal country with which Geneva undertakes bilateral engagement. While the EU provides a strong mediating dimension, this cooperation is largely practical rather than focused on influencing the shape of EU policy.

Conference of Cantonal Governments

Geneva and the other cantons contribute to Switzerland's EU and foreign policies through the Conference of Cantonal Governments (CCG).⁶² This body is organised by the cantons themselves, and was established in 1993 following the narrow rejection of EEA membership in the national referendum the year before. While the CCG considers matters related to domestic policy and external affairs, a central goal behind its creation was to enable greater involvement of the cantons in Swiss foreign policy. Under the Swiss constitution, as amended, the cantons have the right to be consulted on foreign policy where their powers or direct interests are involved – though the federal government retains authority to decide and the cantons have no right of veto.⁶³

On EU affairs, the purpose of the CCG is to coordinate the cantons' policies. The large majority of the CCG's foreign policy work concerns Swiss-EU relations. To take a collective cantonal position on an issue, a qualified majority of 18 of the 26 cantonal governments is required. Collective positions are put to the federal government, and form part of the continual dialogue between the two levels. The federal and cantonal governments also engage with each other through the Europe Dialogue,⁶⁴ a high-level intergovernmental forum for discussion on EU policy between representatives from the federal government and the CCG. Switzerland is a linguistically and culturally diverse state, and the different cantons hold diverging views on the EU. Geneva, Zurich and Basel are among the most supportive of a closer relationship between Switzerland and the EU. Support from the cantons for the federal government's EU approach is important politically, not least as they often have responsibility for implementing laws resulting from the EU-Swiss agreements. Switzerland's direct democracy model also means that public opinion on the EU in the cantons is regularly tested in referendums.

Swiss Engagement in Brussels

Switzerland operates a unified external affairs presence built around its federal institutions. Neither Geneva nor any of the other cantons have separate offices in

Brussels or in EU member states. All federal and cantonal government engagement in Brussels is based in the Swiss Mission to the EU. A specific official within the mission, the Representative of the Cantons, is responsible for ensuring the cantons' interests, as determined by the CCG, across all of its work in Brussels. This representative is the only agent of the cantons located outside the Swiss state. The official is a member of the Swiss delegation in meetings and negotiations with the EU, where cantonal powers and interests are involved – including the recent institutional framework negotiations, and Schengen mixed committee meetings of the Justice and Home Affairs Council and COREPER II. Involving the cantons in the federal government's approach to Schengen is especially important, as they have responsibility for police and justice.

As a third country outside the EEA, Switzerland has even less access to EU decision-making than its EEA EFTA counterparts. It must therefore invest extensively in indirect engagement with the EU institutions and the member states. The Swiss mission builds contacts and networks with EU officials, develops bilateral relationships with member states and engages with members of the European Parliament. Swiss businesses, particularly from the financial services and pharmaceutical industries, are also active in promoting their interests in Brussels. Switzerland equally seeks to make use of its decision shaping role, which is limited to Schengen. In a recent high-profile case, it successfully negotiated an understanding with the EU on the revised EU Firearms Directive (EU 2017/853) to make provision for its traditional firearm ownership culture.⁶⁵ A public-initiative referendum was called,⁶⁶ and the arrangements were approved in May 2019 by 64% to 36%.⁶⁷ This accommodation is seen by Swiss and EU actors as an effective use of the EU participation arrangements available to Switzerland. However, its access to decision shaping is significantly reduced from that of Norway, which holds these rights for the EEA Agreement in addition to Schengen.

Summary Point: Geneva

Geneva assesses its strategic interests to include modernising EU-Swiss relations and maintaining Switzerland's relationship with the EU internal market, influenced by its close relationship with France. Like all Swiss cantons, it conducts its EU engagement indirectly through the Swiss federal institutions in place of a distinct external presence.

6. Quebec

Quebec is known for its francophone history and strong sense of identity, with some considering it the ‘most European’ province of Canada.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the geographical distance means that the relationships between Quebec and the EU, and Canada and the EU, are of a very different order than for countries like Norway and Switzerland. While the EEA/EFTA states are highly integrated into the EU’s internal market and conduct most of their trade with the EU,⁶⁹ Quebec’s and Canada’s strongest economic relationship is by far with the United States.⁷⁰ Accordingly, for Quebec engagement with the EU is much less about exercising influence over EU policy-making (and EU laws which might substantially impact its own position), and more about creating and expanding opportunities for trade and collaboration.

Organising Quebec’s External Relations

Under Canada’s federal system, Quebec has vibrant political institutions⁷¹ and significant provincial competences.⁷² While the federal government is responsible for foreign policy and trade,⁷³ the Quebec government actively engages internationally in support of its responsibilities and distinct identity. Quebec has an extensive global presence and robust structures to organise its external relations. A dedicated government department, the Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie (MRIF), has responsibility for managing Quebec’s external affairs.⁷⁴ MRIF operates with around 475 staff, and total expenditure for the ministry in the 2019-2020 budget is set at C\$112 million (£67 million).⁷⁵ Quebec’s current international policy, *Quebec on the World Stage: Involved, Engaged, Thriving*,⁷⁶ was published in 2017 and contains two themes related to the EU – (1) the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and (2) northern and Arctic affairs. This policy is developed further in MRIF’s current *Strategic Plan 2018-2022*.⁷⁷

Through MRIF, the Quebec government maintains a sizeable international footprint, with 32 representations worldwide, ranging from full delegations to trade offices.⁷⁸ Nearly all its international offices are situated in separate premises from the local Canadian diplomatic mission. The government is also represented abroad by three envoys, focused respectively on: climate change, northern and Arctic affairs; human rights, LGBT rights and gender equality; and international mobility and professional qualifications.⁷⁹ Quebec is more active in external affairs than any other Canadian province, due to its history but also its desire to contribute to international issues. This substantial investment in international affairs is underpinned by a philosophy that external engagement and diplomacy can be strategic investments with positive returns over the longer term. Quebec’s external relations are also founded on a consensus among the Quebec public that this external action is appropriate and worthwhile.

Strategic Engagement with the EU

Major priorities for Quebec in its EU engagement are research, innovation and trade. Quebec has a developed knowledge economy, and fostering and developing relationships with European partners on research and investment are a significant focus. The province values Canada-EU research cooperation, and it provides funding to support Quebec researchers participating in Horizon 2020 projects.⁸⁰ It pursues strategic engagement with the EU institutions to further these interests. The Quebec government organises around three ministerial visits to Brussels per year, the most recent of which have concentrated on the European External Action Service and the

European Commission's Directorate-General for Trade. The government also engages regularly with the EU Delegation to Canada and EU member state embassies in Ottawa, and EU member state consulates in Montreal.

One particular dimension of Quebec's EU engagement is around artificial intelligence (AI). The Quebec government has set the ambition of making Quebec a world-leader in AI research, innovation, business activity and adoption. Montreal is already an internationally-recognised hub, with dense AI research networks at the University of Montreal and McGill University. The government commissioned a strategy on developing Quebec's AI ecosystem,⁸¹ which led to the Montreal Declaration on the Responsible Development of Artificial Intelligence.⁸² An International Observatory on the societal impacts of artificial intelligence and digital technology was recently launched at Université Laval, and Quebec hosts the Canadian government's AI-Powered Supply Chains Supercluster (SCALE.AI).⁸³ From the perspective of Quebec actors, an important feature of these specialisations has been the sustained university involvement beyond initial and start-up phases – expertise has remained in universities and not substantially migrated to the private sector, and therefore resulted in better social outcomes.

Quebec's objectives for its EU relations in this regard are to build its reputation on AI in Europe, and to foster related business and research connections. The Quebec government is an observer on the European Commission's High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence,⁸⁴ and a Quebec-based entrepreneur is also a member.⁸⁵ Through this kind of engagement, Quebec can contribute to the EU's debates on the policy environment that is being developed for AI technology and industries – which are important to all external actors given the EU's global role as a regulatory power. This specialisation on AI also features in the trade and investment work of Quebec's offices in Europe. The investment by Quebec in establishing an international profile of excellence and expertise in AI and technologies of the future is ultimately a strategic decision intended to sustain economic and social development at home. Policy engagement with the EU around AI serves to enhance that profile, while related EU-Quebec research collaborations and trade and investment activity are manifestations of success in generating benefits from this particular focus.

Quebec Government Offices in Europe

A significant part of the Quebec government's international footprint is located in the EU. While these offices are of differing sizes and focus, the larger delegations cover political, economic and cultural affairs, in addition to education and immigration. Its European network consists of full general delegations in Belgium (Brussels), France (Paris), Germany (Munich) and the UK (London); a delegation in Italy (Rome); a bureau in Spain (Barcelona); and a trade office in Berlin. Quebec also has two separate additional offices in Paris, one each for the Francophonie and UNESCO. Most of these offices are tasked with covering both their host country and neighbouring countries. For instance, the London delegation is also responsible for the Nordics and Ireland. Trade promotion is also carried out by Investissement Québec (IQ),⁸⁶ the government's trade and investment agency, run by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation. In Europe, IQ operates from the Quebec government offices in London, Munich and Paris, and from the Canadian embassy in Stockholm.

The Quebec Government Office in Brussels covers both relations with the EU and bilateral relations with the Benelux countries.⁸⁷ Around a quarter of its staff work on EU affairs, and its major EU priority is CETA. The office actively monitors EU legislation and decisions related to CETA and international trade, along with the

progress of member state ratifications of the agreement. While the Quebec government considers CETA to be a major source of new economic opportunities, relatively few Quebec companies have so far made use of the agreement to increase exports to the EU. In contrast, under CETA's current provisional application, EU exports into Quebec have notably increased. In addition to its policy work, the EU team in the office works to assist Quebec companies to understand the EU and the options under CETA to trade with it. Brexit is another area of focus – given the UK's ostensible withdrawal from CETA if it leaves the EU, and the resulting uncertainty over future Canada-UK trade relations. The office also produces an annual report of its strategic activities,⁸⁸ which serves as a useful means of showcasing its engagement work.

Overall, Quebec's European offices emphasise developing bilateral relations with their host and remit countries. Unsurprisingly, Quebec's strongest EU bilateral relationship is with France, a country with which it has extensive links. The two partners have long-standing institutions to structure their relations, including the Permanent Commission for Franco-Quebec Cooperation.⁸⁹ While this range of interaction with multiple EU member states does involve a degree of engagement on EU policy, the predominant focus is on direct bilateral issues. Engagement on EU affairs is delegated primarily to the Brussels office, while the other offices focus on bilateral trade, investment, partnerships and networks. Major international themes for Quebec, such as Arctic affairs, are taken up by the relevant offices – in that case, the London office with the Nordic countries – though without a significant EU focus.

Relationship with the Canadian Mission to the EU

The Quebec Government Office in Brussels and the Canadian Mission to the EU share a collaborative working relationship. Officials meet regularly to exchange information and ideas, whereas formal structured engagements are limited. This approach is considered more productive and avoids the complexity often associated with intergovernmental relations within Canada. The Quebec office will sometimes seek assistance from the Canadian mission on securing meetings with senior EU officials. Where EU-Canada relations relate to provincial competence, the Canadian mission will normally proactively keep the Quebec office informed. On other matters, the Canadian mission is more reactive to engagement from the Quebec office. The two representations also organise joint activities in Brussels, and the mission is seen to be supportive of Quebec's European trade and innovation priorities.

The most significant recent development in Canada-EU relations has been the conclusion of CETA.⁹⁰ Both sides consider the agreement as a standard-setter on how trade and trade agreements are conducted globally. CETA was ultimately determined to be a 'mixed agreement' – engaging both the EU and its individual member states – so it requires ratification by all EU states. Pending those notifications, most of CETA has been provisionally applied since September 2017. The process of EU national ratifications of a major treaty is normally protracted, and to date only 13 member states have ratified CETA.⁹¹ While international trade is a federal competence, the Canadian government took the view that it was important to involve Quebec and the other provinces and territories in the CETA negotiations. Canada did not have a predefined intergovernmental procedure regarding trade negotiations, so the processes that developed were new. The aim was to secure internal Canadian consensus on major points related to provincial competence, before negotiating with the EU.

In preparation of the Canadian negotiating positions, numerous public consultations were undertaken by the federal, provincial and local governments. Bodies such as the Council of the Federation, the association of the premiers of the provinces and

territories, contributed to the pre-negotiation national dialogue on CETA.⁹² During the negotiations, while the federal government conducted all talks for Canada, provincial delegates, including from Quebec, attended the negotiation rounds as part of the Canadian team. The CETA discussions concerned matters of provincial competence, including services, procurement, pharmaceuticals and intellectual property – and this factor served as the anchor for their participation. Indeed, a number of the EU's priorities in the negotiations fell within provincial jurisdiction domestically in Canada, making their involvement even more logical. For the federal government, the implementation of CETA has been made easier by the fact that the provinces and territories were involved from the beginning, and were on board with the agreement at the time of its signature.

The conclusion of CETA has transformed Canada-EU relations beyond trade. The agreement has created new venues for dialogue, including joint committees, stakeholder forums and scope for regulatory cooperation, giving Canada greater access to the EU's ongoing debates. The EU and Canada also signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement alongside CETA, with the aim of increasing cooperation in areas such as human rights, international peace and security, and sustainable development. Collaboration can also develop organically – for instance, the EU and Canada currently run an ad hoc partnership on disinformation and election interference.⁹³ The Canadian mission has also become known as a neutral convener of topical events, bringing together different EU actors who value the networking potential. Both Canada and Quebec are active participants in the wider Brussels debate culture, where indirect influence can often begin to be cultivated.

Summary Point: Quebec

Quebec focuses its EU engagement on its strategic priorities, such as artificial intelligence and CETA, to promote trade and research and to contribute to policy debates linked to the EU's global role as a norm-setter. While Quebec's substantial diplomatic footprint in Europe concentrates predominantly on bilateral relations, its offices also engage locally on multilateral and European issues like Arctic affairs.

7. Basque Country

The Basque Country is a highly industrialised territory, with some of the highest rates of exports, productivity, and research and development investment in Spain.⁹⁴ Under its statute of autonomy, the region has extensive competences, including in finance and taxation. In the Basque government, European and external relations are based within the Department of the Presidency,⁹⁵ and EU engagement is well integrated into the government's programme and planning.⁹⁶ One of the strategic objectives of the government's *External Action Plan 2018-2020* is to strengthen the presence of the Basque Country in Europe.⁹⁷ The plan aims to increase the region's direct engagement with the EU institutions and on EU decision-making, and to build influence and leadership in its areas of competence – as a 'co-creator and joint leader' of the European project. EU engagement also forms part of its international framework strategy⁹⁸ and the Basque government launched its *Vision for the Future of Europe* strategy in March 2018 to contribute to the ongoing debates on the EU's future.⁹⁹

Basque Country Delegation in Brussels

The Basque Country Delegation to the EU was established in 1995, though it was preceded by other Basque offices dating back to Spain's accession to the EU in 1986.¹⁰⁰ While operated by the Basque government, the delegation is specifically named to make reference to the Basque Country as a whole and to reflect its mission to represent the region's collective interests. The delegation brings together government, businesses, chambers of commerce, universities and other organisations – under an internal agreement that they will not set up independent offices in Brussels and instead work through the single representation, to provide a more unified voice and to share knowledge and expertise.

From its position within the Department of the Presidency, the delegation coordinates the government's EU policy engagement in Brussels and works with all government departments. Industrial policy, research and development, innovation and internationalisation of the economy are particular areas of focus. For its stakeholders, the office provides specialised information on EU programmes, facilitates European contacts and works to build European partnerships. It supports Basque organisations ranging from businesses to municipal governments in understanding and accessing EU policies, programmes and networks. The delegation also works closely with the SPRI Group, the Basque government business development agency, in its economic activities.¹⁰¹ The office endeavours to make best use of its institutional memory to translate its collective understanding of the EU policy apparatus to assist Basque actors in interacting effectively with the European level.

Relationship with the Spanish Permanent Representation

Relations between the Basque Country delegation and the Spanish permanent representation in Brussels are substantially formalised and structured. The permanent representation organises meetings bringing together all the Spanish regional offices, in which its officials relay EU information to the regional representatives. This dialogue is largely intended as a one-way flow of information rather than an exchange. The permanent representation has several regional affairs counsellors, and the general expectation is that regional offices should mainly interact with the mission through them. The representation also facilitates some participation by the regions in the work of the EU Council. The Basque Country and Navarre, the two Spanish regions which

run their own tax systems, now form part of the Spanish delegation for the Council working group on taxation – previously a long-held demand.

All Spanish regions are included in the work of the Council configurations which the Spanish government decides are related to regional competence. These are currently: (1) Agriculture and Fisheries, (2) Education, Youth, Culture and Sport, (3) Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs, and (4) Environment. Their participation is limited to one regional representative as an observer in the Spanish team for the Council's working groups, COREPER and ministerial Council meetings. The regional offices take part in a six-month rotation, aligned with the presidency of the EU Council, in exercising this role. The incumbent will coordinate with the other regions and report back on meetings. However, this system can be time-consuming for the nominated region and perceived as more of a burden than an opportunity. Most dossiers run much longer than six months, so regional offices build up expertise during their short tenure but then pass on unfinished files to the next office, which must begin again on those issues.

Regional Partnerships and Promoting Innovation

Regional partnerships and networks are an important part of the Basque Country's engagement with the EU. Its positions are not always supported or represented by the Spanish government, and working with other regions and actors across Europe can often prove effective in delivering messages to the EU institutions. For instance, the Basque Country is a member of Euromontana,¹⁰² a network of public and private organisations from European mountainous areas. By concentrating on EU officials, and bypassing the member states, the network has been able to create a favourable consensus on EU agricultural funding for mountainous regions.¹⁰³ The Basque Country also works collaboratively through associations such as the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR),¹⁰⁴ a network of coastal regions. Forming alliances can be a productive way of bringing together regions with shared challenges, and articulating a common solution to EU policy-makers.

The Basque Country also builds strategic partnerships with particular regions to advance mutual goals. As an economically prosperous territory, it is focused less on securing EU funding and more on finding and creating opportunities to use its own money in joint initiatives to address its priorities and add value. The region has concluded cooperation agreements in the past few years with Bavaria, Flanders and Wales, intended to develop relations on matters ranging from research, innovation, manufacturing and industrial policy to energy, education, professional development and culture and creative industries.¹⁰⁵ The Basque Country is also a partner in the Vanguard Initiative, an independent network established in 2014 by a number of EU regions to increase industrial innovation.¹⁰⁶ It currently co-leads one of the pilot projects, 'Advanced Manufacturing for Energy Related Applications in Harsh Environments', jointly with Scotland. This Vanguard project has facilitated greater contact between figures in research, business and government across the ten participating European regions. The European Commission has been particularly interested in the Vanguard Initiative and how its model could be adopted more widely.

Promoting innovation and best practice to EU actors is another means by which the Basque Country conducts its EU engagement. Basque government actors frequently visit the EU institutions to share developments around the region's modern industrial economy, research and technology. By showcasing new innovations to the Brussels policy community, the Basque Country builds its reputation for excellence in these areas. From the Basque government's perspective, an important part of this profile

building is the active participation of the innovators themselves – researchers, entrepreneurs and designers eager to share their new creations at European level. Moreover, EU actors recognise various forms of success in the Basque Country – the Basque system of vocational education was recently highlighted by an EU agency as European best practice.¹⁰⁷ The Basque Country delegation has also recently received expressions of interest from EU officials on the experience of Bilbao, its largest city, in urban renewal and development, establishing contact between them and city authorities. Receiving proactive contact from EU policy actors is a hallmark of meaningful influence, as it demonstrates that the EU actors have internalised the Basque Country's profiles of expertise and consequently decided to consult the region of their own initiative in the formation of related EU policies.

Basque Government Presence in Europe

The Basque government's only full delegation in Europe outside of Spain is its Brussels office. Its other delegations are mainly located in Latin America and the United States. The government's presence in Europe takes on a strong trade and investment focus, aligning with its emphasis on developing its modern industrial economy. Through its SPRI Group, based in the Department of Economic Development and Infrastructure, the Basque government operates a substantial portfolio of agencies and initiatives around trade, investment and innovation.¹⁰⁸ Its *Basque Industry 4.0* strategy is designed to develop the region's position in knowledge-intensive manufacturing, concentrated on its Smart Specialisation Strategy priorities of advanced manufacturing, energy, nanotechnology and biotechnology.¹⁰⁹ Its related Basque Digital Innovation Hub is intended to foster enterprise in robotics, connected machines, additive manufacturing and cybersecurity,¹¹⁰ while its 'Invest in Basque Country' programme is focused on foreign direct investment.¹¹¹

Basque Trade and Investment (BTI) is the government's main business development and internationalisation agency,¹¹² intended to support Basque companies in expanding their interests abroad, particularly small and medium enterprises. Its aim is to provide a holistic approach to internationalisation, drawing on the wide-ranging expertise within the SPRI Group. BTI operates 16 offices worldwide, including five in EU member states – the Czech Republic (Prague), Germany (Munich), Italy (Milan), Poland (Warsaw) and the UK (London).¹¹³ In addition to working with companies, each BTI office acts as a base to support other SPRI programmes and Basque government engagement locally. BTI works from a multi-year internationalisation plan, which aligns with the government's programme, and it is subject to scrutiny from the Basque parliament. The SPRI Group also collaborates with ICEX Spain Trade and Investment,¹¹⁴ the Spanish government's trade and internationalisation agency. It participates in regular meetings in Madrid alongside other exporting regions to exchange information. In host countries, BTI office staff meet with counterparts from other Spanish regional trade offices and the Spanish embassy ICEX team to share information on the local political and business environment and to plan joint activities.

Summary Point: Basque Country

The Basque Country principally structures its EU engagement around its modern industrial economy, increasing returns through collaborative partnerships with other EU regions and building influence in the EU institutions by showcasing economic and policy innovations. Through its fields of excellence, it works to simultaneously drive forward economic and social development and shape EU policies.

8. Bavaria

Bavaria is the largest federal state of Germany by area, and one of its most populous.¹¹⁵ Within the German political system, it has significant domestic competences and rights to participation in federal institutions. While it is known for its distinctive culture and politics, the Free State of Bavaria is equally an active participant in EU affairs. As a powerful region within arguably the EU's most influential member state, Bavaria is well positioned to exercise a substantive role in EU policy-making, despite not being a principal EU decision-maker. Bavaria hosts 43 diplomatic missions in greater Munich¹¹⁶ – a testament to its political and economic significance. Moreover, the Bavarian state government is forthright in its ambition to shape EU policies as a constituent part of the Union. In defining its EU engagement, it draws legitimacy from both the Bavarian constitution and the German constitution (Basic Law), which the government interprets as giving it a mandate to participate in EU decision-making.¹¹⁷

Bavaria's European Policy

Within the government, the Bavarian State Chancellery exercises overall responsibility for EU affairs, as well as external affairs generally.¹¹⁸ The Minister of State for Federal and European Affairs and the Media undertakes principal political EU engagement. Nevertheless, EU policy is purposefully not confined to a single department. Instead, each government ministry individually pursues the European dimensions of its respective policy fields and conducts its own direct engagement with federal and European actors. The chancellery manages major cross-government topics, such as the EU budget and euro policy. It also coordinates and supports the EU work of the different ministries, including providing finance for EU engagement activities. While articulating a distinctive European and international presence, Bavaria considers its external engagement to be complementary to German federal foreign policy.

The Bavarian state government since 2018 has been a coalition between the centre-right Christian Social Union (CSU) and the centrist Free Voters of Bavaria. Indeed, the CSU has been the primary governing party in Bavaria since the 1950s. This continuity of conservative government has inevitably shaped the region's European policy. The current government has styled Bavaria as a 'stable anchor and influential force in the heart of Europe'.¹¹⁹ Drawing on its geographical position, it also sees itself as a bridge and bridge builder between eastern and western Europe. Europe forms a major part of its current coalition agreement,¹²⁰ which includes a clear commitment to European integration and to working at state, federal and European levels to actively shape EU policies. The agreement pledges the government to strengthen direct engagement with EU policy actors, cooperation with European countries and regions, and participation in EU forums to which it has access – particularly the Committee of the Regions.

Bavaria's European policy covers a wide range of themes and policy fields. It reflects a strong internalisation of EU issues into domestic politics and socialisation of German political actors to the EU, alongside the practical implications of EU law for state and federal policy. The government's priorities for the EU include increasing the input of regions into EU policy-making, mainly by significantly enhancing the power of the Committee of the Regions. Currently, the Committee's formal role in EU decision-making is consultative, and only within certain areas of legislation. This point of view is related to the idea of a 'Europe of the Regions', the concept that regions could take on a greater role in EU policy-making as European integration made states less

relevant.¹²¹ The government also advocates more proactive application of the principle of subsidiarity, the fundamental EU concept that decisions should be taken as closely to the citizen as possible, and only brought up to European level where that would be more beneficial. It published a position paper in May 2018 on strengthening subsidiarity in the EU's work.¹²² Its central premise is that the EU should give greater consideration to determine which matters could be better addressed at national and sub-national levels, and only develop an EU approach where common solutions are better.

Unsurprisingly then, on policy-making, the Bavarian state government takes the view that the EU should redouble its focus on 'core competences' – such as around the internal market and the euro. In keeping with the current German federal approach, Bavaria remains opposed to more radical eurozone reform, such as mutualisation of European national debt or the creation of a 'transfer union' in which more money is moved from wealthier EU states or less wealthy ones. On external migration into the EU, the state government supports a rapid expansion of Frontex, reform of the Dublin system of asylum-seeker processing and increased returns of unsuccessful asylum-seekers to third countries – policies intended to reduce immigration. The government also argues for the EU to strength its position in the world through taking a more unified approach through the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and using rule-based trade policy to promote European standards. On Brexit, it would prefer the UK to remain close to the internal market, but prioritises the stability and unity of the EU. These policy positions underline the point that EU regions can develop detailed perspectives on EU issues and integrate them into their government programme, even on areas for which they do not have direct competence – but, as part of the EU, they have interests to articulate.

Engagement at National and State Levels

Contributing to the German national position on EU issues is another important means of engagement for Bavaria. Under Germany's federal system, Bavaria and the other states have codified rights to manage EU affairs domestically in their areas of competence and to be involved in national EU policy.¹²³ Bavaria has six seats in the Bundesrat, the second chamber of the German parliament – the highest number possible under the system of digressive proportionality.¹²⁴ In the Bundesrat, it can work with other regions to pass resolutions on EU topics and then put those points to the federal government. Bavaria has its own representation in Berlin, and it also engages directly with federal actors on pertinent questions – not just with the Federal Foreign Office, but across federal ministries on EU-related work. Since Bavaria is a larger and more influential German state, it has greater clout to engage directly with the federal government. The work of the Bavarian state government is also complemented by the strategic approaches of the state's municipalities, such as Munich, which sets its own annual European and international affairs strategy,¹²⁵ focused on an urban agenda and supporting European integration.

Bavaria also undertakes extensive engagement on the EU with the public. It organises a range of activities to foster citizen engagement and participation in the EU.¹²⁶ While not directly related to EU engagement, they bring indirect benefits to the region's EU profile. The government has launched an ongoing series of citizens' dialogues on the future of the EU, taking place throughout Bavaria. One of the recent events featured European Commissioner for Justice Věra Jourová, as part of the Commission's own citizens' dialogue programme.¹²⁷ These events can therefore serve as opportunities for Bavarian actors to engage directly with senior EU figures. In the run-up to this

year's European Parliament elections, the government sponsored a Europe Bus to travel around the state as a mobile information centre, to bring attention to the elections and inform citizens on the EU.¹²⁸

The government joins municipalities, civil society and others annually in organising the European Weeks – two weeks of EU-related activities around Europe Day. Bavaria participates in the federal Europe Competition, a nationwide student contest about the EU which is funded by the federal and state governments. Through its annual 'School for Europe – Bavaria' awards, local schools are also recognised each year for their outstanding contributions to the promotion of European integration. Bavaria awards a Europe Medal, recognising individuals who have served Bavaria in a united Europe or contributed to the international reputation of Bavaria in the world. The government's Bavarian Centre for Political Education also offers resources on learning about EU affairs.¹²⁹ EU actors, especially in the European Commission, often take note of such initiatives and look favourably upon them, which can lead to a better environment for successful engagement.

Bavarian Representation to the EU

The Bavarian Representation to the EU, situated in the prominent and restored former Institut Pasteur de Bruxelles, is the central point for Bavaria in Brussels.¹³⁰ In line with the government's philosophy, advocating Bavarian interests in Brussels and Strasbourg is considered just as important as doing so in Berlin. With 35 staff from across Bavarian state government departments, it is a sizeable mission for a region – as are most of the EU offices of German regions. Its primary functions are to assist in coordinating EU policy across the Bavarian government and to engage with the EU institutions and the EU member states. In keeping with its robust policy positions on EU affairs, the Bavarian representation builds dense networks of contacts with EU actors, particularly in the European Commission, EU Council, European Parliament and Committee of the Regions. It also acts as an essential relay of pertinent EU developments for the government in Munich. The representation maintains productive relationships with the German permanent representation and other German regional offices in Brussels, while still pursuing its own interests – especially in areas of regional competence, such as media and culture.

In Brussels, the representation undertakes a number of activities to further its priorities. It hosts frequent ministerial visits and occasional Bavarian cabinet meetings in Brussels, including one in May 2018 featuring an exchange of views with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and European Commissioner for Budget and Personnel Günther Oettinger.¹³¹ The representation produces a biweekly 'Europe Report'¹³² – a comprehensive review of all major EU policy developments in Brussels, normally ranging from 70-125 pages – to keep Bavarian actors informed of EU issues. It supports Bavarian businesses, researchers, municipalities and other organisations in engaging and interacting with the EU. The mission equally facilitates the engagement of the Bavarian parliament in Brussels. For instance, it hosted a summit of German and Austrian state parliaments, plus the Südtirol regional parliament,¹³³ which produced a Brussels Declaration on subsidiarity and future cooperation.¹³⁴ This summit also included appearances from the European Commission president and members of the European Parliament. The representation organises around 300 events per year, many featuring high-profile speakers and prominent guests.¹³⁵ It acts as a venue to launch events of Bavarian projects in Brussels, and it runs a culture programme in addition to policy events.

Bavaria engages on a range of major EU issues in Brussels, including those over which it has direct domestic competence and those of which it does not. Particularly in the Commission, its views are often taken seriously in the early stages of policy formation. It is generally considered by EU actors to have a degree of weight in Brussels which is more significant than might otherwise be anticipated for a region. Its representation is successful at engaging with senior figures in the EU institutions and securing their participation in its activities. It has also proven adept at connecting with various Bavarian figures in Brussels, including Bavarian members of the European Parliament and personalities in media organisations and think tanks. Accordingly, the representation has created many avenues for engagement, direct and indirect, in support of its EU strategy.

Engagement in EU Member States

Bavaria's engagement in the EU member states is concentrated primarily on its neighbouring countries and the wider region. It maintains close relationships with its three neighbours, Austria, the Czech Republic and Switzerland – with whom it shares cultural and historical links (and, for Austria and Switzerland, linguistic links).¹³⁶ More broadly, Bavaria maintains economic and social connections to central, eastern and southeastern Europe. On a policy level, it works cooperatively with nearby countries and regions in the Alpine area through organisations such as the Association of Alpine States (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpenländer – Arge Alp*)¹³⁷ and the International Lake Constance Conference (*Internationale Bodensee Konferenz*).¹³⁸ These organisations involve EU and non-EU participants, and their work includes EU policies connected to the transborder regions.

Bavaria's largest focus for EU bilateral relations is the Czech Republic.¹³⁹ The two territories share longstanding economic, trade, historical and cultural links, and they have operated a Bavarian-Czech working group at official level for over 20 years. Since 2010, political investment in the bilateral relationship has intensified, with increased ministerial visits. Bavarian-Czech relations covers almost all fields of policy, with clear commitments to working together on EU affairs. Their cooperation also involves many actors at local level – bordering administrative districts in eastern Bavaria and western Czech Republic work collaboratively on cross-border issues. The long-term objective is to promote convergence in the border areas of Bavaria and the Czech Republic. The Bavarian Representative Office in Prague, opened in December 2014, is currently Bavaria's only government delegation in an EU member state.¹⁴⁰ The office organises 20-30 events per year and aims to promote cooperation between government, business, civil society and citizens. The Czech Republic also operates a consulate general in Munich.¹⁴¹

Bavaria's presence in Europe is otherwise largely focused on trade and investment. Invest in Bavaria,¹⁴² the state's trade and investment agency, is run by the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy. It has 28 trade offices around the world, including seven in the EU: Austria (Vienna), Bulgaria (Sofia), Croatia (Zagreb), Czech Republic (Prague), Hungary (Budapest), Poland (Warsaw) and Romania (Bucharest).¹⁴³ The Prague trade office is separate from the government delegation. It also has two trade offices in other parts of Europe: Switzerland (Zurich) and Ukraine (Kiev). The Bavarian trade offices are concentrated in central and eastern Europe, in keeping with Bavaria's history and connections.

These offices promote trade and investment, and work with Bavarian businesses, universities and municipalities to foster economic opportunities and support internationalisation. In a recent announcement, the current Bavarian minister-

president, Markus Söder, stated that Bavaria intends to open an office in London at some point in the future.¹⁴⁴ Should this pledge progress, it will remain to be seen whether this representation would be a trade office or full delegation. Even as a region which is highly visible and active in EU affairs, Bavaria notably focuses its presence in EU member states on trade instead of political and EU relations.

Summary Point: Bavaria

Bavaria engages on the EU's major debates, including those for which it does not have direct competence, in recognition of the importance of EU policies for its interests. Nevertheless, even it focuses its EU engagement efforts in Brussels and Berlin, and largely prioritises bilateral relations in its presence in EU member states.

9. Comparing Approaches to EU Engagement

This report evaluates the EU engagement approaches of three different categories of territories – third countries, third country regions and EU regions. Their constitutional arrangements and formal relationship with the EU are important factors in how they engage with the Union. These countries and regions invest significant time and resource in networking, lobbying and attempting to influence EU actors, on short-term decisions and long-term policies. From outside the EU, indirect routes can often be the only means of engagement available. The approaches to EU engagement outlined in the six case studies are now analysed in five dimensions: (1) engagement with EU decision-makers, (2) engagement by regions through their national governments, (3) engagement in EU member states, (4) cooperation with European actors and (5) international profiles.

Engagement with EU Decision-Makers

The most common approach of interacting with the EU is to engage directly with its principal decision-making institutions – the European Commission, the member states (acting in the EU Council) and the European Parliament. Other EU institutions, such as the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee, form part of the policy environment, though they are more peripheral to major EU decision-making. The European External Action Service is formally responsible for relations with third countries and, while interacting with the EEAS, third countries and their regions certainly do not limit themselves to working with the Service alone. This engagement with EU decision-makers predominantly takes place in Brussels.

Most third country and regional governments make a priority of establishing good relationships and contacts within the European Commission. Its extensive and varied role in the functioning of the EU means it is a logical point of focus. The Commission originates and proposes EU legislation, monitors and enforces EU law, implements EU programmes and represents the EU collectively. It also contains a high concentration of EU knowledge and expertise – both of law, policy and history, and of current trends and developments. Many Commission officials are receptive to engagement from non-EU as well as EU stakeholders, including in the development of EU legislation and programmes. The Commission is also often perceived as having a longer-term focus than other, more political, parts of the EU machinery.

Norway gathers a significant amount of its EU intelligence through its strong relationships with Commission actors. This information is essential in enabling it to build a picture of the EU's internal activity. It also capitalises on its status as an EEA country to seek to influence the development of EU policies, including by offering expertise to the Commission. The Basque Country, as a region inside the EU, fosters connections with Commission officials to develop a reputation for excellence in its key economic and policy areas, and to become a source of ideas for the Commission as a result. For an international partner like Quebec, this engagement is often more about finding information than influencing policy, such as how the Commission will implement CETA in EU law. However, Quebec equally engages with Commission actors on major global debates, including artificial intelligence.

For third countries and regions, while engaging with member states is important, the task is also more challenging. The EU's large membership of 28 states makes it difficult to network with all their national governments. Countries and regions often gravitate towards those member states with which they already share connections,

whether through geography, culture, language or history. Of the three principal EU decision-making groups, the scope for working with member states is also the most differentiated between state and regional governments. Even outside the EU, fellow states can more easily conclude formal political agreements and cooperate within international politics. While member states will engage with regions, they are often more reserved in the areas and extent of such cooperation, depending on their internal politics and those of the prospective region and its own state. Nevertheless, cooperation between bordering European regions and states, inside the EU and out, is often more feasible where shared challenges are involved.

The relationships that Norway maintains with its Nordic EU neighbours Denmark, Finland and Sweden are an essential part of its EU engagement. Through these member states, it gains a window into the intergovernmental workings of the EU Council and potential influence on EU policies. Where the Norwegian government is particularly concerned about a possible new EU development, for instance, one or more of the Nordic EU governments may occasionally take on board Norway's position – but that is a rare offering and beyond Norway's control. Bavaria has strong relations with the neighbouring Czech Republic, and they work cooperatively together across EU policy fields to exchange information, build partnerships and shape agendas. North Norway has shared connections with Finland and Sweden, based on their common high north geography. These relationships are crucial for its engagement on the development of EU policies that affect the high north, including on the Arctic, energy, natural resources and the environment.

The European Parliament has progressively become more important as a focal point for third countries and regions. Its accrual of powers and status as co-legislator of the Union have resulted in the intensification of relations with parliamentary actors. In engaging with the Parliament, attention must be paid to its different components – from the parliamentary leadership, political groups and committees, to chairs, rapporteurs and individual members. Debates in the Parliament can garner international attention, as do initiatives such as its Sakharov Prize for human rights and freedom of expression.¹⁴⁵ High-profile decisions on major issues such copyright reform can have a significant impact on the shape of EU laws. Parliamentary figures also often become champions for particular causes, generating focus and publicity. Even EU member states invest resources through their permanent representations in maintaining good relations with the Parliament.

Across both government and parliament, Norway has built extensively direct relations with the European Parliament. In addition to engagement from the Norwegian mission, the Norwegian parliament operates in Brussels through its office inside the European Parliament – the only such non-EU office. The European Parliament's delegation for the EEA, EFTA and the North is a particular point of reference for interparliamentary links.¹⁴⁶ As EU regions, the Basque Country and Bavaria are connected to the Parliament through the MEPs who represent their regions. Where these members hold leadership roles in the Parliament or the political groups, they can be well placed to advocate for their region's interests. Moreover, their MEPs are EU decision-makers – the question is not of influencing from the outside, but persuading from the inside.

Regional Engagement through the National Government

Alongside engaging directly with EU decision-makers, regions work with and through their national governments to influence in the EU. This indirect engagement is largely dependent on the domestic constitutional context, including the formal division of powers between the regional and central levels, and the ongoing state of

intergovernmental relations within the country. Such work takes place in the national capital and in Brussels. In the capital, regions attempt to contribute to setting the national European policy, including specific positions in line with their interests. Successfully shaping national policy is often easier in a federal system with strong institutional structures to facilitate and guarantee regional participation, and where a region can cooperate with counterparts to contribute to policy.

As a region without an external government presence, Geneva invests nearly all of its EU engagement efforts in operating at the national level in Switzerland. Through domestic structures including the Conference of Cantonal Governments, it works with other cantons, particularly those which share its pro-EU outlook, to influence Swiss federal EU policy and Switzerland's evolving relationship with the EU. Bavaria undertakes extensive representation on European affairs in Berlin to influence national EU policy, participating in federal institutions including the Bundesrat, partnering with other German states and dialoguing directly with the federal government. Given the German government's major EU decision-making role, Bavarian contributions to the national European policy can feed directly into EU policy-making.

In Brussels, regions often cooperate with their national governments to achieve more than they might if they worked on their own. For many regions, their Brussels office is their largest or only principal policy representation outside of their state, and therefore a substantial and important investment. A major factor in this engagement is the relationship between the region's office and the state's diplomatic mission in Brussels. If the two offices communicate with each other well and share information, the region may have greater scope to influence their country's on-the-ground engagement on EU business. Collaborative relations between the region and the state locally in Brussels can be beneficial for both sides. Combined efforts can be maximised where both make best use of the information and intelligence which the other has gathered.

North Norway works collaboratively in Brussels with Norwegian government and other Norwegian regions, jointly covering more policy ground and forming an interactive network of Norwegian policy actors. Through its regular contact with Norwegian government officials in Brussels, North Norway can often achieve greater influence on Norwegian EU policy there than in Oslo, particularly given the relatively modest powers of local government at home versus its high degree of organisation and activity in Brussels. The Basque Country participates in some of the work of the EU Council through the Spanish government, along with the other Spanish regions. Although the arrangements for this access can bring their challenges, direct involvement in EU business is highly valuable. Even as only an observer, participation in the Council's work affords prime information and access, which can also be utilised to inform the Basque Country's engagement on EU affairs with the Spanish government in Madrid.

Engagement in EU Member States

Brussels is the main venue for engaging and influencing in the EU – for third countries, regions and indeed EU member states themselves. Nevertheless, representations and offices in the EU member states can be complementary to EU engagement. The differences between states and regions in their EU representations are substantial. States possess a foreign policy and diplomatic network, and many maintain diplomatic missions across different EU members. These embassies bring together officials with different specialisations, engaging across political, economic, culture and other spheres, benefitting from the diplomatic standing to pursue state-to-state relations. They are equipped to include EU matters into their bilateral relations in national capitals, with the aim of understanding and influencing those states' positions on EU

policies and of enhancing their influence with those governments in Brussels. Norway has a diplomatic presence in the vast majority of EU member states, incorporating both EU matters and direct bilateral issues into its EU national relationships. Among the member states, it devotes particular attention to the Nordic EU states and major EU countries including France and Germany, all with the intent to influence EU policies from the different national angles.

Regions often operate a smaller and more selective footprint in EU member states, due to constraints on their resources and powers. Regional governments must determine in which priority EU countries to locate representations – these decisions are often based on existing political and economic relations with member states or their regions. Some regions alternatively only operate an office in Brussels, and others have no external offices at all. Regions must consider whether to prioritise political, economic, cultural or other areas for their offices – trade and investment, along with research and innovation, are often principal themes. In practice, most regional offices in EU member states engage more on bilateral relations than direct EU policy. Where regions do attempt to influence national governments locally on EU decision-making, those efforts are usually highly targeted.

In its relations with EU member states, Quebec engages across the political, economic and cultural spheres. It maintains a large footprint in Europe for its position, though its representations have different sizes and remits. Their placement also reflects Quebec's priorities. Notably, it has a full delegation in Munich, but only a trade office in Berlin – a product of its long-standing close partnership with Bavaria. The Basque Country operates a network of trade and investment offices in Europe, but no government representations. These offices are run by the economy department instead of the presidency department (which has responsibility for external affairs), and they focus on internationalisation, business support and investment. Bavaria maintains a government representation in Prague, as part of its close relationship with the Czech Republic – yet all of its remaining representations in EU member states are also trade and investment offices. Even for a region as thoroughly engaged in contributing to EU policies as Bavaria, its focus in member states predominantly remains on the economy rather than shaping EU affairs.

Cooperation with European Actors

While states and regions focus much of their EU engagement directly on the main EU decision-makers, they also work with other state and non-state actors, particularly in Brussels, by forming or participating in alliances, associations and partnerships. Although it is more common for regions to join European associations than third countries, both work collaboratively with government and civil society actors on salient policy issues to build their profile in Brussels and achieve policy impact. Lobbying the EU institutions as a collective bloc of regions with shared interests and challenges can often prove more effective than working through national governments or engaging directly with EU decision-makers alone. Some regions, whether inside or outside the EU, also conclude partnership agreements with each other, as a means of reinforcing these mutual relations.

The Vanguard Initiative, bringing together the Basque Country, Scotland and 33 other constituent EU regions, was like many European alliances created from capitalising on the high density of relevant actors in Brussels. Through its joint pilot projects and policy work, the alliance functions through combining individual efforts on existing EU programmes – in this case on smart specialisation. It has garnered interest from the European Commission as a model to be replicated – a mark of influence in interacting

with the EU institutions. For North Norway, the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas network enables it, as a non-EU region, to cooperate with partner EU regions in the Brussels policy environment. Since most of the network's members are part of the EU, North Norway benefits from their EU status in the alliance's engagement with the EU institutions.

International Profiles

The EU engagement approaches undertaken by third countries and regions constitutes various forms of diplomacy and paradiplomacy. At the same time, soft power comprises an essential component of their engagement. In particular, governments channel soft power through the creation, development and maintenance of international profiles. These soft power profiles are based upon national or regional areas of expertise and excellence, innovative norms and policies, or unique features and characteristics. They are grounded in the strategic interests of states and regions, and form important dimensions of their external affairs policies. Whether Norway as an international peace-builder or the Basque Country as a modern and sophisticated industrial powerhouse, North Norway as an Arctic stakeholder or Bavaria as a stable anchor and economic partner in central Europe – these profiles are intended as points of reference for European and international actors. Where successful, they shape how these states and regions are perceived and remembered, and serve as strengths in their EU engagement.

International profiles for states and regions are therefore connected to their reputation and identity. In external relations, whether from organic origins or intentional establishment, such profiles are deliberate and cultivated. Small state and regional governments normally prioritise a select number of international profiles, as part of their EU and international strategies – keeping in mind that they are normally long-term investments which span government terms of office. Profiles are often framed as contributions to Europe and the world, and the most successful involve active domestic actors supporting the overall message through their continued efforts in that regard. Nevertheless, states and regions must be realistic of the limitations imposed by geopolitics. The current unstable nature of global affairs and the numerous challenges to multilateralism make it more difficult to have impact, and therefore for many of those profiles to hold their value.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, profiles are not exclusive and states and regions compete for shared space. For instance, Norway, Ireland and Canada all define themselves as leading proponents of multilateralism, strong champions of human rights, and active supporters of the UN and in particular its peacekeeping operations. All three are currently campaigning for two non-permanent seats on the UN Security Council for their regional group in the upcoming 2020 election.¹⁴⁸

While international profiles necessarily have a global dimension, they are equally important for EU engagement. Where astutely connected to the EU's ongoing debates and salient issues, such profiles can create opportunities for cooperation and avenues for influence. Profiles can derive from a variety of sources, including expertise (such as international peace-building), innovations (equitable AI governance), values (gender equality) or natural characteristics (maritime geography). The most successful profiles combine the unique identifiers of a particular state or region with inspiring solutions to shared global concerns. Pertinent international profiles, when deployed in EU engagement, can result in recognition as a leader in the field, identification as a key stakeholder in the area, and internalisation as a source of policy ideas and best practice. They bring practicality to EU relations by creating opportunities to interact and build relationships with senior EU figures, opening pathways for partnerships and

dialogues, and ultimately leading to possibilities to influence EU decisions and policies. Such profiles can therefore prove invaluable to states and regions in meaningfully interacting with the EU, by bringing greater substance to their bilateral EU relationship and sustaining relations over the long term.

Summary Analysis: EU Engagement

Third countries, third country regions and EU regions take different approaches to EU engagement based upon their powers, interests and relationship with the EU. Most concentrate their EU policy engagement in Brussels, while their diplomatic and paradiplomatic efforts in member states are often focused more on bilateral affairs. The most successful approaches to EU engagement effectively match the national or regional objectives and message with the current EU agenda and policy priorities of the EU institutions and major member states. While influencing EU policies and decisions outside the core of EU decision-makers remains challenging, it is certainly possible where states and regions are well organised, and governments intelligently combine their engagement efforts with the existing related activities of their business and civil society communities.

10. Principal Conclusions

Having analysed the EU engagement approaches and strategies of the preceding six case studies of third countries and regions, this report offers the following twelve principal conclusions for Scotland on developing and enhancing its EU relations in the years ahead:

1. Contemporary EU Strategy

In order to manage its EU relations most effectively, Scotland should ensure that it operates with a contemporary and comprehensive EU strategy. This blueprint should define its core principles for European integration, its major priorities for EU policies and its headline objectives for EU engagement. Such a robust strategy would provide the necessary focus for Scotland to optimise its European engagement, given the EU's high volume of legislative business and its fast-paced policy environment.

2. Relating to the EU Agenda

A central component to productive EU engagement is recognising the EU's salient issues. Scotland should remain cognizant of the EU's agenda and the policy priorities of the EU institutions and major member states. It should adapt its engagement messages to align with this agenda where possible to increase their resonance. Scotland could enhance its engagement further by participating more fully in the EU's ongoing debates, including through setting out a vision for the future of Europe.

3. Cross-Government Participation

The most successful EU engagement approaches require active participation from all levels of government – from the head of government to policy officers. Scotland should continue to intelligently build contacts and relationships with relevant counterparts across the EU institutions, member states and regions, including through targeted visits by ministers and officials. It should also facilitate progressive Europeanisation of the Scottish policy space to foster synergies with EU actors, policies and trends.

4. Realism about Challenges

Scotland should be realistic about the challenges it faces to influencing EU policy-making. As neither a state nor an EU member state, its room for manoeuvre at the European level can be more limited. Should the UK leave the EU, Scotland will move further away from the core of EU decision-making, as part of a third country to the EU, regardless of the depth of the future EU-UK relationship. This trajectory would make influencing more difficult, but certainly not impossible.

5. Focus on Decision-Makers

To influence EU decision-making, it follows that efforts should be concentrated on the principal EU institutional decision-makers: the European Commission, the EU member states (acting in the Council) and the European Parliament. While it can be difficult to network across the multitude of interests within these institutions, Scotland should strategically engage with pertinent actors to argue its cause. Many EU officials are receptive to ideas and evidence, including from peripheral European sources, when advocated by well-informed, up-to-date interlocutors.

6. Cooperation with European Partners

Where complementary to its direct engagement with principal EU decision-makers, Scotland should continue to build strategic partnerships with likeminded colleagues at European level, whether states, regions or non-state actors, to achieve common goals. Coalitions and alliances on specific policy themes can often attract greater attention from EU officials than individual lobbying. Scotland can also accrue influence through contributing to the wider Brussels debate culture. It should consider convening the Scottish diaspora community in Brussels and elsewhere in Europe.

7. Presence in Brussels

The primary venue for engaging on EU policy-making is undisputedly Brussels. In addition to the Commission and Parliament, all of the member states are active on the ground, alongside the non-EU diplomatic community and important non-state actors. By simultaneously interacting with these constituencies, personnel based in the city can create extensive useful networks. Scotland should ensure that its representation in Brussels is sufficiently resourced to meet its ongoing policy engagement needs and should keep the matter under review.

8. Presence in the Member States

Despite the primacy of Brussels as the venue for EU activity, targeted engagement in the EU member states can equally support Scotland's EU objectives. While the analysis suggests that it is more common for states than regions to integrate EU affairs into their bilateral relations with member states in their capitals, Scotland could nevertheless deploy its existing and future European network of representations to incorporate EU matters more into its bilateral relationships, while also ensuring that they are sufficiently resourced.

9. Partnership with the UK Government

For regions, EU and non-EU alike, their EU engagement can be enhanced through productive cooperation with their state government. Successful partnerships involve a high degree of collaboration on EU issues and sharing of EU information, and they act as a two-way street, with both sides bringing something to the table that the other values. Despite clear differences on relations with the EU, Scotland should continue to endeavour to work substantively with the UK government on relevant EU matters.

10. Building a National Team

Central government is far from the sole participant in interacting at European level – businesses, NGOs, municipalities, universities, think tanks, interest groups and others all engage with EU actors across different themes and dimensions. Scotland should intelligently harmonise its government engagement in the EU with the activities of its societal co-constituents where it leads to national messages and positive synergies. This model of building a national team for the European level is feasible at the scale of small states and regions.

11. Public Consensus on EU Relations

Engagement in Europe and externally benefits from a strong public consensus at home on the merits and priorities of that engagement. In today's interconnected world, interaction at European and international levels is crucial to achieving domestic policy goals. Scotland should seek to establish enduring common ground

on the priorities for its EU relations and the principles underpinning its EU engagement. It should create opportunities for public participation in defining Scotland's European interests and setting a shared vision for EU policy.

12. Defining International Profiles

States and regions look to maximise their soft power by showcasing their areas of excellence and defining their own uniqueness through international profiles. Where relevant to the EU's priorities and advanced adroitly, such profiles can create routes into EU circles and pathways to influencing EU policy-making. While facing no shortage of possible options, whether renewable energy, political participation or human rights, Scotland should identify and focus on a select number of core profiles to advance its interests in the EU.

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