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## **Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee**

# **Annual Report of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee 2025-26**



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# Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

To consider and report on the following (and any additional matter added under Rule 6.1.5A)—

- (a) the Scottish Government's EU and external affairs policy;
- (b) policy in relation to the UK's exit from the EU;
- (c) the international activities of the Scottish Administration, including international development; and
- (d) any other matter falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture and any matter relating to intergovernmental relations within the responsibility of the Deputy First Minister.



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# Committee Membership



**Convener**  
**Clare Adamson**  
Scottish National Party



**Deputy Convener**  
**Jamie Halcro Johnston**  
Scottish Conservative  
and Unionist Party



**George Adam**  
Scottish National Party



**Neil Bibby**  
Scottish Labour



**Keith Brown**  
Scottish National Party



**Patrick Harvie**  
Scottish Green Party



**Stephen Kerr**  
Scottish Conservative  
and Unionist Party

# Introduction

1. This report covers the work of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee during the parliamentary year from 13 May 2025 to 8 April 2026.
2. During this parliamentary year, the Committee has focused on: the constitution (two pieces of inquiry work: options for a legal mechanism for triggering any independence referendum; and the transparency of intergovernmental activity and its implications for parliamentary scrutiny); the BBC Charter review (a broadcasting inquiry); and culture funding (the pre-budget scrutiny).
3. The membership of the Committee has changed over the parliamentary year as follows—
  - Jamie Halcro Johnston joined the Committee on 4 September 2025 (replacing Alexander Stewart who left the Committee on 26 June 2025)

# Meetings

4. The Committee met 30 times during the reporting period, with 5 meetings held wholly in public, 20 partly in public and partly in private, and 5 wholly in private.

## Legislation

5. The Committee considered two pieces of legislation: the [UEFA European Championship \(Scotland\) Bill](#), and the [Desecration of War Memorials \(Scotland\) Bill](#), the former which became an Act on 27 February 2026 and the latter which was withdrawn by the Member in Charge during the Stage 1 debate on [3 February 2026](#).

# Inquiries

6. There were three main inquiries during this period.
7. The Committee agreed by division to undertake an [Options for a legal mechanism for triggering any independence referendum inquiry](#) and published a [report](#) on 27 February 2026.
8. We published a report on [17 March 2026](#) following the [Transparency of Intergovernmental activity and its implications for parliamentary scrutiny](#) inquiry.
9. The Committee also published a report on 20 March 2026 following the [Scottish Broadcasting](#) inquiry. Part 2 of the report was our submission to the UK Government's [Britain's Story: The Next Chapter - BBC Royal Charter Review, Green Paper and public consultation](#).

## Pre-budget scrutiny

10. The Committee undertook [Pre-Budget scrutiny](#) of the culture portfolio ahead of Budget 2026-27. Having agreed to take a cumulative approach to budget scrutiny over Session 6, this inquiry followed on from the Committee's previous pre- budget scrutiny for 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26. The Committee published its [report](#) on 21 November 2025.
11. We also wrote to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee on [23 January 2026](#) outlining issues around how the culture and heritage sector supports the Scottish Government's priorities and outcomes relating to the [Climate Change Plan](#).

# Historic Environment Scotland

12. We took evidence on governance issues at Historic Environment Scotland (“HES”) from HES on [30 October 2025](#), from the Auditor General for Scotland on [22 January 2026](#) and from the Scottish Government on [6 November 2025](#) and [29 January 2026](#).

## EU Law Tracker

13. The Committee previously commissioned Dr Lisa Whitten, Queen's University Belfast, to produce an [EU Law Tracker](#) to assist the Parliament in scrutinising the Scottish Government's commitment to EU alignment. During the reporting period, the fifth and sixth reports of the EU law tracker were published in September 2025 and February 2026. The reports included a number of case studies outlining changes to EU law and which were shared with relevant subject committees.

# UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly

14. In London on 17 and 18 November 2025, the Convener and Deputy Convener attended the [sixth meeting of the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly](#), which was established to help monitor the implementation of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The Convener spoke in the creative and cultural exchange plenary session.

## Inter-Parliamentary Forum

15. The Convener and Deputy Convener attended the seventh meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum (“IPF”) in the House of Commons on 12 June 2025. This was attended by other Chairs, Conveners and Members of the relevant committees in other legislatures across the UK. Following the meeting the Forum issued a [joint statement](#) and agreed to invite ministers from all four governments to appear together at the next IPF to discuss issues of shared concern.

# Legacy report

16. The Committee published a [Legacy report](#) on 24 March 2026 to provide a steer to our successor committee on a number of issues within our remit which are likely to arise early in Session 7, including—
- Intergovernmental activity
  - UK-EU relations
  - Interparliamentary relations
  - Membership of external bodies
  - Scottish Government's international work
  - Budget scrutiny
  - Historic Environment Scotland
  - Creative Scotland
  - The BBC Charter Review

