

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee
Thursday 8 May 2025
15th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

The UEFA European Championship (Scotland) Bill: Stage 1 scrutiny

1. The [UEFA European Championship \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced on 12 March 2025. The Bill and its accompanying documents are available [online](#).
2. On 18 March 2025 the Bureau agreed to recommend to the Parliament that the CEEAC Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Bill at Stage 1.
3. The Bill establishes commercial rights protections in line with UEFA's requirements for hosting EURO 2028 matches in Scotland. EURO 2028 will be co-hosted by and the UK and Ireland, with the matches held in Scotland due to take place at Hampden Park in Glasgow. There will also be at least one official UEFA fan zone in Glasgow.
4. The Committee will hear evidence on the Bill from Scottish Government officials—
 - Rachael Mckechnie, Deputy Director, Major Events
 - Lucy Carmichael, Head of EURO 2028 Unit
 - Ninian Christie, Scottish Government Legal Directorate
5. A SPICe briefing on the Bill is available [online](#) and also included at **Annexe A**

Clerks to the Committee
May 2025



SPICe Briefing

Pàipear-ullachaidh SPICe

UEFA European Championship (Scotland) Bill

Andrew Feeney-Seale

The UEFA European Championship (Scotland) Bill aims to meet commitments required by UEFA in relation to the protection of commercial rights for UEFA and its commercial partners to host the tournament in Glasgow during summer 2028. This Bill proposes restrictions on ticket touting, street trading and advertising which strengthens current legislation to meet UEFA requirements.



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Summary and key Bill documents

The UEFA European Championship (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 12 March 2025. The Bill as introduced [can be found on the Scottish Parliament website](#) alongside its supporting documents which include:

- A [Policy Memorandum](#)
- A [Financial Memorandum](#)
- A [Delegated Powers Memorandum](#)
- [Explanatory notes](#)

Overview of the Bill

Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland will host the 2028 European Championships, and Hampden Park in Glasgow will be one of ten host stadiums.

UEFA require that hosts guarantee commercial protections for their partners, and the Scottish Government have opted to take a similar approach to the 2021 Championships by introducing time limited legislation in order to meet these requirements.

[The Bill](#) ¹ sets out provisions in three areas, and the associated enforcement powers and penalties.

- [Ticket touting](#): The Bill will prohibit the touting of a championship ticket. Touting includes the sale of a championship ticket for any value in excess of its face value. There is an exception for the auction of tickets to raise funds for a charity, and to protect those who advertise that a ticket is on sale by another individual where they did not know the seller intended to tout the ticket.
- [Street trading](#): It is an offence to trade in an open place within an event zone during a prohibited time. This includes selling an article or a service, providing entertainment, or appealing for charitable donations. Schedule 2 includes an exemption for certain charitable collections. Existing street trading licences do not exempt the holder from committing a street trading offence in the event zones during prohibited times.
- [Advertising](#): Like street trading, it will be an offence to advertise in an event zone during a prohibited time. An activity will be considered advertising if it is a communication to the public for the purposes of promoting an item, service, business or other concern. Existing advertising licences do not grant an exemption to these restrictions.
- [Enforcement of offences](#): Enforcement officers are defined as an employee of Glasgow City Council with sufficient experience to exercise the functions set out in the Bill, or an individual who Glasgow City Council designate as an enforcement officer. There are restrictions on who can be designated as an enforcement officer. Enforcement officers are given general enforcement powers, which means taking reasonable steps such as seizing, concealing or destroying something suspected to be an infringing article, or to enter and search a place (including a vehicle or vessel).

This does not grant enforcement officers powers to search an individual, or access electronic data.

- [Other provisions](#): including the penalties the offences can attract and the sunset clause.

This briefing provides an [overview of the development of this legislation](#), sets out [further detail on the provisions of the Bill](#), and compares this to the [previous legislation in place for the 2021 European Championship](#).

Background to the Bill

On 10 October 2024 [UEFA announced that Scotland, along with England, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Wales, would be hosts of the European Championships in 2028](#). Hampden Park in Glasgow is one of the 10 host stadiums, and the only one in Scotland. The number of matches to be played at Hampden has still to be confirmed.

Scotland previously hosted four matches as part of the delayed European Championship 2021.

The [2024/25 Programme for Government](#) ² included a pledge to introduce this bill, noting that:

“ The Bill will put in place commercial rights protections to meet UEFA's requirements for hosting EURO 2028 matches in Scotland.”

UEFA European Championship (Scotland) Act 2020

The [2020 Act](#) ³ introduced four new offences, which were largely modelled on similar offences which were introduced during the Commonwealth Games in 2014. These were:

1. A ticketing offence for selling a ticket above face value, or with a view to making a profit. This offence would be committed whether the transaction takes place in person or electronically.
2. A trading offence for trading in one of the three event zones without appropriate authorisation. This aimed to protect UEFA-approved vendors during the hours of operation of the event zones.
3. An advertising offence for advertising in one of the three event zones. This aimed to protect UEFA-approved sponsors during the hours of operation of the event zones.
4. An offence was also created for impeding the work of an enforcement officer.

The Act provided Glasgow City Council with the power to designate enforcement officers. The [Policy Memorandum](#) ⁴ stated that Glasgow City Council would utilise existing trading standards staff with experience of acting as enforcement officers in previous events, including the 2014 Commonwealth Games and the 2012 Olympics.

The ticketing offence was applicable across Scotland, and in the case of electronic sales, outside the country as well. The trading and advertising offences were only be in force during the hours of operation in the three event zones - the Hampden Park zone which was planned to encompass the area around the host stadium, and two fan zones in the city centre (The Merchant City Zone and the George Square Zone). The hours of operation and the precise geographic limits of these zones was set out by Ministers in secondary legislation.

The European Championship was originally scheduled in June and July 2020, [however due to the Covid-19 Pandemic this was delayed until July 2021](#). When the rescheduled events were held at Hampden in June 2021, capacity at the stadium was restricted to 25%

of its capacity, and the city centre event zones were [moved to Glasgow Green](#)

2020 legislation Stage 1 report

In its [stage 1 report](#) ⁵, published on 1 November 2019, the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee supported the general principles of the Bill, and highlighted in its conclusions that:

- The need for primary legislation should have been recognised earlier by the Scottish Government.
- Amendments be considered to remove the exemption granted to UEFA with respect to the ticket touting offence, but that an exemption be made for the charitable auction of tickets.
- The Committee welcomed planned exemptions to the street trading provisions for charity collections and busking.
- The Committee also welcomed the planned amendments to clarify that all enforcement officers would be local authority members of staff within trading standards and consumer protection roles.
- Raised a concern that the Bill potentially provided enforcement officers with wide ranging powers to seek assistance from other persons.
- The expedited nature of the legislation had limited the public engagement, particularly with respect to local community groups, residents or groups representing football fans.
- Finally, the Committee noted that weaknesses in devolved legislation should not be dealt with in a "piecemeal fashion" but that the Scottish Government should give "serious consideration" to developing an events framework bill.

Evaluation of the 2020 Act

In May 2024 in a response to a government initiated question, the Scottish Government provided an [overview of the evaluation of the 2020 UEFA European Championship Bill](#).

This feedback was summarised by the Scottish Government as follows: ⁶

“

- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) have not received any reports under the EURO 2020 Act. As far as COPFS officials are able to identify, COPFS did not receive any reports in relation to ticket touting, illegal street trading or illegal advertising with offence dates between 11 June and 12 July 2021.”
- Glasgow City Council noted that the legislation was essential in ensuring restrictions could be put in place. However, it would have been useful for event partners to have agreed upon the requirement to implement legislation sooner, particularly had the original 2020 dates taken place. This would have allowed for a fuller public consultation and more notice to traders of the restrictions being implemented;”
- The Scottish Football Association echoed the point around the need for identifying a legislative solution sooner, in the context of the originally scheduled EURO 2020. However, the Scottish Football Association recognised that the Scottish Government successfully managed to expedite a process, timetable and resource base that provided considerable comfort and confidence to key project stakeholders – UEFA, the Scottish Football Association, and Glasgow City Council; and”
- UEFA noted that, despite the strong and clear wording of the legislation, implementation of the legislation was challenging. Whilst UEFA considers that Glasgow City Council Trading Standards’ level of resource and patrolling was sufficient, it has also observed that Glasgow City Council Trading Standards did not feel comfortable going above and beyond what they would do in normal circumstances against infringing activities.”

It is worth noting that the 2021 European Championship took place in the context of public health restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This included significantly reduced capacities at many host stadiums, with [Hampden Park in Glasgow being limited to attendances to 25% of capacity](#), and with restrictions on international travel. The 2021 Championship was therefore on a smaller scale than had been envisaged, and it would be reasonable to expect significantly higher attendances at both event zones and the stadium in the 2028 Championship.

Development of the 2025 legislation

The Scottish Government published a [partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment](#)⁷ (BRIA) for the 2025 Bill on 2 May 2024. At the time this was published UEFA had not confirmed its requirements for commercial protections that hosts will have to meet, so this partial BRIA is based on the experience of the previous 2020 European Championships where Glasgow was one of 11 host cities. These set out that any legislation is likely to meet UEFA requirements through:

- prohibiting unscrupulous touting of match tickets both in person and by electronic methods. This could also support a safe and secure event taking place.
- protecting UEFA’s commercial rights and those of its sponsors and licensees, and preventing ambush marketing.

- protecting the ‘character and integrity’ of EURO 2028 by eliminating inappropriate advertising and street trading, including pedlars.
- controlling advertising in designated areas to support the safety and the free flow of spectators to and from the event zones.

The Scottish Government set out why they view legislation as being necessary, noting that events of the scale of the European Championships rely on income from commercial rights to reduce the need for any public finance towards the cost of the event. The Scottish Government note that while there are some protections in statute:

“ the nature of this protection, coupled with the short term, high profile nature of EURO 2028 means that it could be targeted by ambush marketing strategies which could operate successfully within the law. Current laws in Scotland are unlikely to meet UEFA's requirements to host EURO 2028. The proposed legislation would help to ensure successful delivery of EURO 2028 by meeting the likely requirements during the period of the event. It would prohibit ticket touting, which is considered to benefit the public as a whole. It would also strengthen restrictions on street trading and advertising.”

Alongside the partial BRIA, the Scottish Government [launched a consultation which closed on 26 July 2024](#). The consultation received 26 responses; 15 from individuals, 8 from organisations, and 3 received by email. The [independent analysis of responses](#)⁸ was published on 11 October 2024. This analysis concluded that there is general support for the proposed measures to protect commercial rights in Euro 2028. Key themes highlighted in this analysis include:

- Just under two thirds of respondents suggested that the restrictions on street trading during Euro 2020 had no impact on them.
- The most prevalent theme in open comments about the proposed street trading and advertising measures for EURO 2028 was that they would have no or minimal impact.
- While most respondents felt they would not be impacted by the proposed ticket touting measures for *EURO* 2028, some highlighted positive impacts for visitors, such as reduced contact with illegal ticket touts and enhanced security.

The Scottish Government [published a full BRIA on 13 March 2025](#)⁹. The full BRIA sets out three options with respect to commercial rights protection for UEFA Euro 2028:

1. Do nothing and rely on existing legal protections. This would risk Scotland being unable to host any matches, reducing the anticipated economic and social benefit from Euro 2028. This could also cause reputational damage to Scotland which might adversely impact any bids to host future mega events.
2. Introduce Framework legislation. The Scottish Government state that the required broader scope of this legislation might mean Scotland did not fully meet UEFA's requirements within the required timescale. The Scottish Government also raise a concern that this could lead to an uncertain frequency and geographical spread of advertising and street trading restrictions, with greater costs to a larger number of businesses for compliance as a result (compared to bespoke EURO 2028 legislation).
3. Bespoke Euro 2028 legislation. This is the preferred option, as the Scottish

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Government state it would secure the necessary protections to enable Scotland to host games, while limiting the public sector costs of enforcement.

The Scottish Government intend to lay the regulations to define the event zones and final provisions around permitted or prohibited activities around one year before Euro 2028, if the Scottish Parliament passes the Bill.

Contents of the Bill

[The Bill](#) ¹ sets out provisions in three areas, and the associated enforcement powers and penalties.

- [Ticket touting](#): The Bill will prohibit the touting of a championship ticket. Touting includes the sale of a championship ticket for any value in excess of its face value. There is an exception for the auction of tickets to raise funds for a charity, and to protect those who advertise that a ticket is on sale by another individual where they did not know the seller intended to tout the ticket.
- [Street trading](#): It is an offence to trade in an open place within an event zone during a prohibited time. This includes selling an article or a service, providing entertainment, or appealing for charitable donations. Schedule 2 includes an exemption for certain charitable collections. Existing street trading licences do not exempt the holder from committing a street trading offence in the event zones during prohibited times.
- [Advertising](#): Like street trading, it will be an offence to advertise in an event zone during a prohibited time. An activity will be considered advertising if it is a communication to the public for the purposes of promoting an item, service, business or other concern. Existing advertising licences do not grant an exemption to these restrictions.
- [Enforcement of offences](#): Enforcement officers are defined as an employee of Glasgow City Council with sufficient experience to exercise the functions set out in the Bill, or an individual who Glasgow City Council designate as an enforcement officer. There are restrictions on who can be designated as an enforcement officer. Enforcement officers are given general enforcement powers, which means taking reasonable steps such as seizing, concealing or destroying something suspected to be an infringing article, or to enter and search a place (including a vehicle or vessel). This does not grant enforcement officers powers to search an individual, or access electronic data.
- [Other provisions](#): including the penalties the offences can attract and the sunset clause.

Ticket touting

Sections 2 to 5 of the bill set out provisions related to the ban on ticket touting.

Section 2(1) states that it is an offence to tout a championship ticket, which is defined as selling, offering to sell, exposing for sale, advertising that a ticket is for sale, exchanging a ticket for goods or services, or making a ticket available from another person.

Touting a ticket also requires that the ticket is exchanged either for a value exceeding face value, or with a view to making a profit.

The Bill grants exemptions to UEFA, or to a person acting with authorisation granted by UEFA.

Section 3 creates an exemption where the ticket is sold for auction either by a charity, or

by any person where the proceeds of the sale are given to charity. A charity is defined as a body registered in the [Scottish Charities Register](#), or a register corresponding to the Scottish Charities Register. If the territory where the charity operates does not have a register, then the condition is that the purpose of the charity is one of the charity purposes mentioned in Section 7(2) of the [Charities and Trustee Investment \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#) ¹⁰.

Section 4 grants an exemption for someone who advertises a Championship ticket for purchase for another person, if the person advertising or making available could not reasonably be expected to know that the seller intended to sell the ticket above face value, or with a view to making a profit.

Section 5 notes that the ban on ticket touting is subject to schedule 1, which provides exemptions for providers of information society services.

Street trading

Sections 6 to 11 set out provisions relating to the ban on street trading. This states that it will be an offence to trade within an event zone during a prohibited time. Event zones and prohibited times will be defined by regulations.

Activities which will be considered trading for the purposes of the trading offence are defined as the sale, or offer of sale, of an article or service. This also includes providing entertainment for gain or reward, making an appeal to members of the public to give money or other property for any purpose, including charitable purposes.

Section 9 sets out that holding an existing trading licence is not a defence, while section 10 states that Glasgow City Council must offer alternative trading arrangements to existing street traders during times when the trading offence applies.

Glasgow City Council must also issue guidance about trading within event zones.

There are a number of exemptions to the trading offence, which are set out in Schedule 2. This includes selling current newspapers, activity undertaken by Glasgow City Council or Glasgow Life, activity undertaken by a UEFA partner, or provision of services including ATMs, or for certain charitable collections, where the person has been given permission by Glasgow City Council under section 119 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (charitable collections).

Advertising

Sections 12 to 16 set out provisions relating to the ban on advertising. These state that it will be an offence to advertise in an event zone, during a prohibited time. An activity whose purpose is to communicate to the public to promote an item, service, business or other concern will be considered advertising. The Scottish Government may through regulations prescribe or provide criteria to determine which activities are or are not to be treated as advertised, and which places within the event zones the advertising offence will apply.

As with street trading, holding an existing advertising license will not exempt a person from committing the advertising offence.

Schedule 3 sets out some exemptions to the advertising offence. This includes certain types of demonstration, council activities, the distribution of newspapers, and advertising displayed on a hand held device which is intended only to be viewed by the individual using the device.

Glasgow City Council must issue guidance about the advertising within the event zones.

Enforcement of offences

Sections 17 to 32 set out provisions related to the powers of enforcement officers.

Section 17 defines an enforcement officer as someone employed by Glasgow City Council, or an individual designated as an enforcement officer, who in the Council's view has sufficient experience to exercise the functions conferred by this Bill. In order to designate someone as an enforcement officer, that person must be an inspector of weights and measures appointed under Section 72(1) of the [Weights and Measures Act 1985](#)¹¹, authorised by a local authority to enforce provisions under section 92 of the [Trade Marks Act 1994](#), or is employed by another local authority with sufficient experience to exercise the functions of this Bill.¹²

Section 18 sets out that an enforcement officer may take reasonable steps to prevent or end the commission of an offence under this Bill, or in connection with proceedings or anticipated proceedings in respect of an offence. Reasonable steps can include seizing, concealing or destroying anything that the enforcement officer believes is an offending article. Sections 19 to 21 restrict these powers to only when an enforcement officer to seize offending articles only where the officer considers that it is appropriate to end the commissioning of an offence or prevent the future commissioning of an offence.

Section 22 states that an enforcement officer only has the power to enter a premises when permission is given by the occupier, or another person with authority to do so. The premises must be one that the officer reasonably believes an offence has been, is being, or will be committed. Enforcement officers do not have the power to search individuals, or to access data stored electronically. If an enforcement officer does access a premises, they must take reasonable steps to secure it.

Section 23 states that an enforcement officer may be assisted by any other person which may be necessary to exercise actions set out in section 18.

Section 24 concerns the use of reasonable force, and states that an enforcement officer can only do so when authorised by a constable, and where a sheriff has granted a warrant for the use of reasonable force. An enforcement officer may only use reasonable force without a warrant where they believe that there is a real and substantial risk that delay in seeking a warrant would defeat or prejudice the purpose of taking action. A constable must accompany the enforcement officer in both cases where reasonable force is being used.

Section 25 sets out further restrictions on entering houses. An enforcement officer can only enter a house where the person who usually resides there grants permission, or where a warrant has been obtained. This entry can only be at reasonable times, and when accompanied by a constable.

Section 26 states that an enforcement officer may require any person to provide

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information considered appropriate in connected with an offence or a suspected offence under this Bill.

Section 27 states that an enforcement officer must produce evidence of the officers identity and authority while taking any actions under sections 18, 22 or 26, if requested to do so.

Section 28 sets out that an enforcement officer may purchase any goods or services, or authorise another person to do so, for the purposes of determining whether the Bill is being complied with. This would not constitute an offence under this Bill.

Section 29 sets out that a person whose property is damaged as a result of actions taken by an enforcement officer, or a person accompanying them, under sections 18 or 22, may seek compensation from Glasgow City Council.

Section 30 states that it is an offence to obstruct an enforcement officer.

Section 31 states that a constable may do anything that an enforcement officer can do under sections 18 to 28, and that the restrictions set out in sections 19, 20, 21, 24, 25 and 27 only apply where they do not conflict with a constable powers under any other enactment.

Scope and other provisions

In terms of scope, the Bill provides Scottish Ministers powers to introduce regulations that will define the “Championship period” and “event zones”, as well as the “prohibited time” during which the trading and advertising offences can be committed. The Bill contains a sunset clause, and will cease to have effect on 31 December 2028.

Section 33 sets out that all three offences detailed above will carry a maximum fine of £20,000 on summary conviction, or to a fine on conviction on indictment. A person convicted of an obstruction offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.

Section 34 sets out that where an offence is committed by an organisation, both the organisation and a responsible individual will have committed the offence.

Differences to the 2020 legislation

In September 2019 SPICe published a [briefing on the legislation that was introduced for the 2021 European Championship](#) ¹³. According to the [policy memorandum for the current Bill](#) ¹⁴, it has been “modelled on” the legislation that was in place for the previous championships.

There are some differences which parliamentarians may wish to consider:

- The 2020 legislation set out that the ticket touting offence could be committed outside of Scotland – this extra-territorial element has been removed and the offence is now confined to acts committed in Scotland. Extra territorial aspects of ticket touting removed – so only applies in Scotland. The penalty is set at up to £20,000 offence on summary conviction or to a fine on conviction on indictment, in line with other offences.

The Scottish Government have stated that the increased fine is in recognition that ticket touting has continued to grow and adapt to new technology, making it easier to tout at scale and for sums of money significantly higher than that envisaged in the 2020 legislation.

- Following evidence at Stage 1 of the 2020 legislation, concerns were raised that tickets which were sold or auctioned for charitable purposes could be considered to be an offence. As a result, amendments were agreed to include an exemption to ticket touting offence in the case of tickets being auctioned or used for charitable purposes. This charity exemption has been retained in [the Bill](#), however as UEFA terms and conditions usually prohibit the transfer of tickets there is a question about how this might work in practice.
- The previous legislation was passed less than 1 year prior to the planned date of the championships, and required an expedited process in Parliament. This time the legislation is being prepared further in advance, which allows more time to set out the specific restrictions of street trading, and means a greater proportion of licences issued will reflect the anticipated restrictions around the tournament.
- There is more information on the face of the bill than the 2020 legislation, and so less reliance on regulations. For example, Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 include details of some of the exemptions to the street trading and advertising offences which were previously set out in regulations.

Costs associated with the Bill

The [Financial Memorandum](#)¹⁵ sets out that costs are expected to be between £320,000 to £440,000 in total between April 2026 and February 2030 . The components of this total cost

- The Scottish Government is expected to incur costs of between £210,000 to £220,000. These costs relate to the development of the regulations, support providers to partners to develop guidance for businesses, and engagement with businesses and UEFA. The most significant part of this are assumed Scottish Government staff costs between April 2026 and September 2027, which account for £195,000.
- The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service is expected to incur costs of up to £10,000, Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service is expected to incur costs of up to £30,000, and Scottish Legal Aid Board is expected to incur costs of up to £10,000. The Scottish Government have modelled three scenarios based on their being one case prosecuted, four cases prosecuted (the most likely scenario) or six cases prosecuted. The estimates above are based on this central scenario of four summary criminal cases, 1 post conviction appeal, and 2 days compensation appeal. The Scottish Government state that:

“ Based on experience of this legislation, it is expected that the vast majority of those affected will respect the restrictions. Where restrictions are breached, enforcement action could include a warning being given to ensure the person is aware how to comply with the restrictions or could result in confiscation and destruction of property. Prosecutions would be a last resort. That means that very few prosecutions, if any, are expected.”

- Police Scotland is expected to incur costs of £45,000. This is comprised of £40,000 in anticipated training costs, and £5,000 costs associated with supporting enforcement officers.
- The costs to Glasgow City Council are the most uncertain, estimated at between £65,000 and £125,000. A significant part of this uncertainty is due to not knowing which teams and how many matches will take place at Hampden as part of Euro 2028, as well as the extent of the event zones and their hours of operation. £45,000 to £65,000 of the anticipated costs relate to having enforcement officers attending event zones. The costs of raising awareness around the new provisions is estimated at £5,000 to £15,000, while the costs of taking enforcement action (such as removing advertising) is estimated at £10,000 to £30,000.

When it comes to the impact on businesses, the Financial Memorandum highlights the potential economic opportunity that hosting the tournament presents. Across the UK and Ireland, socio-economic benefits of up to £2.6 billion are expected.

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