

Scotland and the Spirit of Europe

Protecting Scotland's European
Relations in the Face of Brexit

Anthony Salamone

LAUNCH
REPORT

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Introduction

Brexit and independence presently constitute the two predominant issues in Scottish politics. While different in their origins, the two questions are now deeply interwoven. Scotland will always be affected by the UK's relationship with the EU, whether it remains in the UK or becomes independent – as Ireland demonstrates clearly. The surrounding context in which Scotland would emerge as an independent state is significantly altered from 2014, and any new prospectus for independence will have to account for that reality. Brexit serves two principal functions in the independence debate: substantively, departure from the EU; and, instrumentally, discord with Scotland's democratic voice. The UK Government's conduct of the process, and its resulting challenges to devolution and intergovernmental relations, have further eroded confidence. The disconnect between Edinburgh and London seems only to grow.

Scotland is a pro-European country – evidenced not simply by its decisive Remain majority in the EU referendum, but in the multitude of anti-Brexit resolutions of the Scottish Parliament and consistent opinion poll majorities for remaining in the EU. In the European Parliament election six months ago, 71% of the [vote in Scotland](#) went to pro-EU parties. Scottish public life is defined by a mainstream Europeanism which crosses the independence divide. Our economic, political, social and cultural relationships with the rest of the EU are essential and valued.

The Scottish Government, alongside businesses, NGOs and wider society, has prepared extensively for Brexit, across the multiple missed departure deadlines and the risk of a no-deal exit. While such practical measures are imperative, protecting Scotland's European relations from Brexit requires an expanded approach. To secure its relationships with the EU27 and the EU institutions, Scotland must give stronger manifestation to its mainstream Europeanism. This report sets out ten Priority Actions which the Scottish Government should undertake in this direction, complementing its existing initiatives and further strengthening Scotland's place in Europe. These recommendations consist of steps to take within Scotland and in its engagement with the EU – and actions at home can prove as impactful as engaging outwith Scotland.

Before outlining its Priority Actions, the report surveys the EU's perspective on Brexit and the main challenges that Brexit poses to Scotland's European relations. Should Brexit take place, the greatest risk is that Scotland loses its relevance to the EU and fades into the political background. The targeted recommendations in this report can serve as vital avenues to maintaining broader EU relationships and avoid Scotland becoming defined exclusively as a Brexit actor. With the launch of European Merchants, my intention is to bring innovative analysis and bold ideas to Scotland's European relations and the major questions facing the European Union.

Anthony Salamone
Managing Director

The EU's Perspective on Brexit

In considering the realities of the UK's prospective departure from the European Union, it is crucial to recognise and understand the positions of the EU27. While that fact might seem to a degree self-evident, given the EU's role as the co-constituent of the Brexit process, EU points of view have often been strangely absent from the UK's ongoing political debate. This lack of awareness undoubtedly symbolises the introspective nature of the Brexit saga within the UK. In that regard, the continued struggle over EU membership has been founded more on growing domestic challenges, and an apparent incognisance of the UK's progressive geopolitical decline, rather than particular concerns about relations with EU Member States and the EU institutions.

The frustratingly circuitous nature of the post-referendum Brexit outlook has been the product of persistent internal UK political division. While Brexit in whatever form reduces simply to argument over varying degrees of political and economic damage, it was far from inevitable that the UK's approach should become so fractious and disorganised. Much of the tumult has originated from Westminster battles over finding or avoiding consensus on a way forward, instead of the actual negotiations with the EU27. Although some of the political discord arises from genuine divergence of ideas, most stems from sheer political calculus – from all the relevant UK political parties. The combination of an inward-looking debate and an underappreciation of the EU27's collective and individual perspectives has resulted in the UK's repeated misreading of the EU's positions and intentions on Brexit – compounding the difficulty of an already challenging situation.

For the EU27, observing the UK's voluntary political splintering and geopolitical downsizing has been a confusing, exasperating and regrettable experience. The EU did not seek the UK's withdrawal and, contrary to the frequent tenor of UK public debate, it is normal and reasonable for the EU to act in its own interests on Brexit. Although the EU27 have reiterated frequently their desire for a close relationship with the UK, the EU will naturally uphold its principles – such as the integrity of its internal market – which the UK Government has seemingly sought to undermine in demanding preferential non-member terms. Moreover, the UK's multitude of red lines has simultaneously reduced the possible depth of a future relationship and raised concerns in the EU about the UK's long-term motivations and trustworthiness. Even at this late stage, the collective UK political consciousness appears ignorant of the fact that the EU is the superior actor in political and economic terms, if only by virtue of its size. The EU-UK relationship after Brexit would be predominantly defined by the UK conforming to the EU – patently not the reverse.

Since the result of the 2016 referendum, the EU has sought to contain Brexit from the wider European agenda – which is already full. Despite the UK's political machinations, the Union has been largely successful in that endeavour. The European Commission

concentrated its Brexit negotiation and preparation work in its specially-designated Task Force 50. The Member States gave the Commission clear negotiating mandates and presented a remarkably united front externally, deflecting the UK's repeated attempts to negotiate directly with individual states. Task Force 50 undertook frequent dialogue with Member States and the European Parliament – in contrast to a prevalent assertion in the UK that the Commission was pursuing a Brexit agenda without support or knowledge of EU capitals. Deliberation on Brexit in the European Council was limited to brief updates, approvals of the withdrawal agreement and political declaration and extensions to the Article 50 period. Even in the other parts of the EU's intergovernmental machinery – principally the General Affairs Council and COREPER – Brexit has not been a subject of discussion as much as people might imagine. Fundamentally, despite its crucial importance for Ireland, and to a different extent frontline trading states such as France, Belgium and the Netherlands, Brexit is no longer a principal priority issue for the EU.

The fate of Brexit will be decided in the UK, and the EU27 now await the result of the December 2019 General Election. With the withdrawal negotiations, clarifications and amendments complete, the EU will look for clarity from the UK on how it intends to proceed. While the EU27 have been willing to accommodate several Brexit extensions, that sentiment may not necessarily endure. The new leadership of the EU institutions could be less sympathetic, and France has been the most vocal Member State in calling for a definitive conclusion to this phase of Brexit. If the UK is truly leaving the EU, attention must finally turn to the future relationship. The EU considers itself ready and the Commission has already refashioned its Brexit unit into the [Task Force for Relations with the UK](#). By contrast, the UK Government has not published a detailed proposal for the future relationship since the derided Chequers plan in July 2018. If the UK ultimately remains in the EU, it must chart a difficult path to becoming a functional and productive Member State.

Brexit would see the UK become an external partner to the EU. It would take time to construct a meaningful future relationship – much longer than the original deadline of December 2020, not least given the UK's inability to articulate a realistic vision. However, with the UK outside the EU, the withdrawal treaty would not be able to sustain continued extensions in the same manner as Article 50. The UK would occupy a precarious position, with a renewed cliff edge on the horizon. Despite its concerted efforts, Brexit does bring practical consequences to the EU as well – on internal politics, the budget and its role in the world, among others. The EU has the capacity to respond to these issues, as well as its numerous internal and external challenges. Although differences are not in short supply, the EU Member States share common values and interests embodied in the European project. In departing from the Union, the UK signals decidedly that it no longer holds at least some of those values and interests. As Scotland looks to sustain positive relationships with the EU27 and EU institutions, it must remain attuned to EU perspectives on Brexit and wider themes, and avoid Westminster's confused mentality on European integration.

Scotland's Brexit Challenges

Scotland has been a peripheral actor to the formal Brexit process. Externally, the negotiations have taken place between the European Commission and the UK Government. Internally, the UK Government has not substantively involved the Scottish Government in the UK negotiating positions or the political developments around Brexit. Although these circumstances have exposed the inadequacies of the UK's existing constitutional arrangements, the UK level seems unable to recognise the imperative for major reform. Consequently, Scotland has not been in a position to translate its strong views against Brexit into a determinative political outcome. While many EU actors have been sympathetic to Scotland's situation, the Union has been obliged to take its direction from the UK Government.

Scotland's opposition to Brexit – in particular its continued support for the free movement of people and its positive approach to EU citizens – has been widely noted by EU Member States. Its pro-Europeanism and the independence debate are the two main points about Scotland which actors in Brussels notice. General Scottish politics are otherwise largely unknown. The Scottish Government's [policy of differentiation](#) has been a core component of its Brexit strategy – demonstrating clearly to European partners that it views EU membership as essential and valuable, contrasted with the UK Government's enthusiastic pursuit of departure. That policy has been widely successful, with it now evident that Scotland is perceived differently and in a more favourable light to the UK. Nevertheless, sentiment alone can have limited practical value and Brexit will continue to pose sustained risks to Scotland's European relations.

Three general-level political challenges will confront Scotland, should Brexit take place. First, Scotland will find its access to EU institutions, policies, programmes and initiatives reduced and dependent upon the future EU-UK relationship. As explored in my recent report on [Scotland's EU engagement](#) for the Scottish Parliament, interacting with the EU from the outside requires substantially increased investment for often minimal returns. Second, Scotland will lose relevance in Brussels by reason of being part of a third country to the EU. Its best defence will be to develop existing relationships and build new ones with EU actors sustained on a broad range of issues of mutual importance beyond Brexit. Third, Scotland will navigate difficult diplomatic dynamics generated by the UK's corrosive approach to the Brexit negotiations and relationships with the EU. While Scotland has successfully established a distinct identity on Brexit, it cannot completely avoid the reputational damage which impacts the UK overall.

In the face of these Brexit challenges, Scotland must increase its efforts to showcase its pro-European credentials and engage fully in the EU's wider debates. The Scottish Government should endeavour to ensure that Brexit policy, despite its importance, does not overtake European policy. While it will have to be realistic about prospects for EU engagement and influence, Scotland can create space for its own European action.

Priority Actions for Scotland

In view of the major challenges which Brexit poses for Scotland, the Scottish Government should undertake the following ten Priority Actions to further strengthen Scotland's European relations:

1. European Citizens' Charter

European citizens in Scotland are a vital part of the national fabric, bringing substantial social, cultural, economic and wider contributions to Scottish society. The Scottish Government has rightly prioritised ensuring the continued freedoms of EU citizens and encouraging fellow European nationals to remain in Scotland. It has announced policies to support European citizens, guaranteeing access to services, assisting in securing UK 'settled status' and promoting an open welcome through the Stay in Scotland campaign. Civil society organisations have equally played an essential role in undertaking significant work for individual citizens. To give structure and prominence to its European values and actions, the Scottish Government should create a Charter for European Citizens in Scotland. This document would be addressed to EU, EEA and Swiss nationals who currently reside in Scotland, or may wish to reside or visit in future.

This European Citizens' Charter could be organised around four sets of principles: (1) commitments, (2) values, (3) rights and (4) connections. On commitments, the Scottish Government could state a headline intention to continue to treat European citizens on the same basis as UK citizens resident in Scotland, in the areas and policies for which it has responsibility. It could undertake to advocate for UK policies in reserved areas which protect and enhance the rights of EU citizens. Moreover, the Scottish Government could make clear that it takes these measures without regard to reciprocity, and instead as a testament to its commitment to the European ideal. The government could also indicate its objective to maintain voluntary alignment with EU policies and regulations wherever possible, which would assist European citizens by facilitating closer cooperation between Scotland and the EU.

On values, the Charter could outline the Scottish Government's steadfast belief in the principles and aspirations of European unity, including the rights of citizens to live without being limited by European national boundaries. It could commit Scotland to endeavour to remain part of the great debates on the future of Europe, and promoting knowledge of and interaction with other European countries and the institutions of the Union. Such priorities are crucial, as Brexit threatens not only practical matters and relationships but the ways of life and sets of ideals which the EU sustains. On rights, the Scottish Government could enumerate its existing continuity policies to support European citizens and new additional measures. These rights would include free access to the National Health Service, and standing and voting in Scottish Parliament and local

elections, as the government has already announced. Further rights could also be incorporated, such as maintaining the ability to work for the Scottish Government, continued non-application of immigration rent checks and access to social assistance, including housing, where Scotland is able to do so. The Scottish Government should give serious consideration to making indefinite the current tuition-free access to undergraduate higher education for European citizens, which would be a bold statement of Scotland's proud dedication to European exchange.

On connections, the Charter could commit the Scottish Government to continuous dialogue with European citizens, representative groups and civil society organisations throughout the evolution of Scotland's relationship with the EU. The government could reaffirm its intention to remain in close contact with the EU Member States and EU institutions in Edinburgh and London on matters related to citizens. While Scotland already has many initiatives to support fellow European nationals, the benefit of a European Citizens' Charter would be to provide focus, clarity and symbolism. Such a document would serve as an important point of reference and reassurance for European citizens in Scotland during these uncertain times.

2. National Conversation on Europe

Whatever the eventual course of Brexit, Scotland will remain a constituent part of Europe and it will have European interests. The country will be affected directly and indirectly by the policies and decisions of the EU, and the public will have views on major European questions. A vital part of maintaining Scotland's European relations rests in continuing to participate in Europe's greater debates. Moreover, even for proponents of Scotland remaining in the EU, either as part of the UK or as an independent state, a nebulous aspiration to 'reform' the EU is often signalled. Providing a national forum to discuss European affairs would benefit Scotland's politics and public life. The Scottish Government should establish Scotland's National Conversation on Europe.

This National Conversation would facilitate collaborative dialogue across Scotland on the future of Europe through issues such as democracy and rights, climate change, geopolitics, and technology and data. The objective would be focusing on European and global challenges, rather than Brexit and independence – which could be difficult in present circumstances. However, the public can certainly treat different topics at once, and indeed the Scottish Government evidently had sufficient confidence against excessive overshadowing to establish the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland. The National Conversation could operate through citizens' dialogues, a dedicated citizens' assembly or other forms of civic participation, including digital formats. Across the EU, the citizens' dialogue approach has been undertaken by the European Commission and Member States such as Germany, Ireland and Finland. Given the evolving nature of European affairs, it would be preferable to maintain a standing forum which could meet regularly, ultimately providing input into the Scottish Government's European strategy.

3. Europe Day

Today's European Union is the product of decades of effort to advance European integration for the benefit of the peoples of the Union. Europe Day, 9 May, marks the annual celebration of European unity and the desire to strive for peace and prosperity on the European continent and around the world. The date coincides with the Schuman Declaration in 1950, in which French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, on the advice of Jean Monnet, called for the creation of what became the European Coal and Steel Community and the first step towards the EU. In Scotland, public events regularly take place on Europe Day and Scottish Ministers actively participate – in marked contrast to UK Government Ministers. Considering its significance for the European project, the Scottish Government should invite the Scottish Parliament to legislate to make Europe Day a public holiday in Scotland.

The creation of a national holiday is rightly a rare event. The Scottish Parliament last used the power to make St Andrew's Day an official public holiday in 2007. In representing partnership and friendship in the European Union, Europe Day constitutes an important annual moment worthy of such commemoration. As a public holiday, it would gain widespread prominence in Scotland and contribute to giving stronger collective expression to Scotland's mainstream European sentiment. For European citizens living in Scotland, the enhanced recognition for Europe Day would reinforce the national message of welcome and provide a focal point to celebrate shared European and global life stories. Designating public holiday status would also be a powerful statement to the EU of Scotland's renewed commitment to the values of European integration, despite Brexit and the UK's Eurosceptic drive. This development would undoubtedly become a topic of note in Brussels and more widely across the EU, and potentially even encourage EU Member States to follow in Scotland's footsteps.

4. European Flag

Symbolism can hold great resonance in the European context, and arguably its most important symbol is the European flag. Shared by both the European Union and the Council of Europe, the standard represents European unity and common values. Since the European flag belongs to the peoples of Europe, it is certainly not necessary to be an EU Member State or indeed part of the EU to display it prominently. With it commonplace to find the European flag featured in countries across Europe, it is surprising that the flag is not more prevalent in Scotland. Given its mainstream Europeanism, the European flag should be much more visible in Scottish public life. The Scottish Government should incorporate the European flag into its identity and encourage its display in Scotland.

The most important action would be to include the European flag next to the Saltire, so that they are normally adjacent to each other. Currently, Scottish Government

buildings such as St Andrew's House and Victoria Quay fly a uniform series of Saltires. With the introduction of the European flag, this pattern would become alternating. The European flag would be incorporated into the business of government, including press conferences, official portraits and organisational brand. Its inclusion would not be limited to European issues or Europe Day, and instead the flag would become a permanent and daily feature of the government's profile. Indeed, the European flag already occupies a related role at the Scottish Parliament, outside which it has flown for many years. Greater usage of the European flag by the Scottish Government would prominently signal its intention to remain an active part of Europe, however Brexit develops. It would give visual manifestation to Scotland's commitment to European values and provide an everyday point of reference for people, including EU citizens living in and visiting Scotland. Embedding the European flag into the Scottish Government's identity would become perhaps the most important and lasting symbol of Scotland's European spirit.

5. Scottish Diaspora in Europe

For European countries like Scotland and Ireland, emigration has been a feature of the national story. The European Union provides people with the opportunity to live, work, learn and experience across Europe, enabling mobility in all directions. Scotland's diaspora communities span the globe, and encompass many parts of Europe. Scottish institutions often focus their engagement with the diaspora on business and trade matters or cultural affairs. While important domains, relations with the diaspora can take on a wider purpose. They also connect with Scotland's overall European relationships – with EU Member States and their policy, business, academic, civil society and other networks. Moreover, inspired by its inclusive New Scots culture, Scotland should adopt a wider definition of the diaspora, including affiliation not just by origin, heritage, affinity or residence, but also education. The Scottish educational diaspora, comprised of people who have in particular undertaken higher education in Scotland, includes many figures in positions of prominence across the European Union.

The Scottish Government should explore means of interacting effectively with the greater Scottish diaspora in Europe, including the educational diaspora. Intensification of contacts should be pursued, including the expansion of existing networks and the creation of new ones. In enhancing these avenues of engagement, the government should consider the interrelationships between its current European and external affairs policies, its European Innovation and Investment Hubs and its present diaspora approach. It may become sensible to establish a task force on diaspora relations or indeed produce a modern diaspora strategy. Relations between countries and organisations are ultimately comprised of relationships between people. Investment in sustaining contact with the wider Scottish diaspora in Europe would produce social and cultural benefits for Scotland. It could simultaneously connect to Scotland's broader efforts in European relations, improving their success through organic relationships.

6. EU Presidency Engagement

An important driver of the EU agenda is the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, held in turn by each of the Member States. The presidency convenes and articulates the collective opinions of the EU Council, which stand alongside the priorities of the European Commission and the views of the European Parliament. Member States undertake years of preparation for their presidencies, working with the Council secretariat and cooperating in trios to provide greater continuity. Time is often a pivotal factor, given that presidencies only last six months and the EU policy process can be relatively slow-paced. One presidency may often complete measures begun by its predecessors, and set in motion its own measures which are in turn completed under others. The acumen of Member States in managing the presidency is linked to their internal reputations in the Brussels system. The Scottish Government should develop an engagement plan for each EU Council presidency.

Given the modest time periods involved, these plans should be highly targeted and produced fairly expediently. They should be informed by discussion in advance with relevant Member State and EU institutional actors. The objective would be for Scotland to interface with the presidency priorities, including mutual interests and areas where Scotland can make a decisive contribution. The current Finnish presidency and forthcoming Croatian and German presidencies have added significance, as negotiations will build to finding an agreement on the next Multiannual Financial Framework. As part of its efforts, the Scottish Government should engage with the presidency Member State's permanent representation in Brussels, embassy in London and consulate in Scotland where applicable, in addition to its ministry of foreign affairs in its capital. Dialogue with national parliamentarians can also prove useful – from the Scottish Government and Scottish parliamentarians. The Scottish Government could consider these EU presidency engagement plans as one anchor of its EU policy relations, alongside a multiannual European strategy and annual work programmes. This approach to the EU presidency would further demonstrate Scotland's continued interest in engaging in the substance of European integration, regardless of Brexit.

7. European Friendship Year

As a European nation, Scotland has long-standing connections with the countries and regions of Europe built over centuries. These relations have been shaped in part by the evolution of Scotland's constitution, and most recently by its participation for the past 46 years in the European Union. Scotland has deep shared heritage and open modern potential to drive its future relationships with EU Member States and other parts of Europe. Other European countries can indeed provide inspiration for Scotland in their innovative approaches to bilateral relations. For instance, the German Federal Foreign Office has embarked upon a series of Friendship Years designed to celebrate shared

connections. Most recently, it organised the Year of German–American Friendship (*[Deutschlandjahr USA](#)*) in 2018/2019 and it has announced, jointly with the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Year of German–Danish Cultural Friendship (*[Deutsch-Dänische Kulturelle Freundschaftsjahr](#)*) for 2020. While these initiatives have each been somewhat different, they represent a promising means of engagement.

The Scottish Government should adapt the Friendship Year concept and focus it specifically on European countries and regions. Potential partners need not necessarily be EU constituents, but it would be prudent that most are in the Union. The initiative would be most productive as a joint endeavour, based on active participation and coordination between Scotland and the European partner. It would take the shape of annual programme of events celebrating connections and showcasing innovation. Culture and exchange would undoubtedly have pride of place, and Scotland’s vibrant cultural and civil society institutions could play an essential role. The European Friendship Year could also incorporate other fields of cooperation, including in policy or commerce, depending on the mutual priorities of Scotland and the prospective partner. In planning and implementing the programme, the Scottish Government should work intensively with the partner’s representations in Edinburgh or London where present, whether an embassy, consulate or office. Since the aim would be to mark existing connections and establish new ones, Scotland could be intrepid in identifying partners with which it does not have major contemporary relations, but where the potential for future relationships is evident. At its most successful, each European Friendship Year would build foundations for cooperation that endure and develop well beyond the conclusion of the programme.

8. Annual Europe Conference

Scotland benefits from a noteworthy tradition of contributing to the major debates of European integration, particularly through its universities and more recently its policy institutions such as think tanks. For instance, the University of Edinburgh currently hosts a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, a prestigious accolade from the European Commission. Its Edinburgh Europa Institute* is the longest-established research centre on European integration in the UK. The Scottish Centre on European Relations,* Scotland’s leading European affairs think tank, published a major report around last Europe Day, *[The Future of Europe: Disruption, Continuity and Change](#)*, setting out Scottish perspectives on some of the great questions facing Europe. Since remaining part of Europe’s major conversations is a core element of protecting Scotland’s European relations, these academic and policy networks hold vital importance. While the best role of government is to interact with these networks rather than operate them, it can nevertheless strategically facilitate the convening of significant moments.

The Scottish Government should underwrite a new major annual European policy conference. Its ambition would be the establishment of a widely-recognised forum

* *The author previously worked in and remains affiliated to both organisations*

that features prominently in the calendar of signature European policy events. This conference would aim to become a Scottish contemporary to engagements such as the European Alpbach Forum, the Prague European Summit and the Bled Strategic Forum in the Member States, and the Friends of Europe's State of Europe and the Centre for European Policy Studies' Ideas Lab in Brussels. Where successful, it would attract attendance from academic and policy communities across Europe and indeed beyond, including world-leading speakers. The event should likely be held in the same city each year, as the geographical indication becomes an important part of its brand. Relevant logistical attributes should be taken into consideration, though Edinburgh or Glasgow would seem the most probable candidates. In this conference, the Scottish Government should act more as sponsor rather than organiser, delegating general responsibility to relevant constituent actors in Scotland. Possible models include the formation of a consortium of Scottish academic and policy organisations or the creation of an independent conference structure. This European policy conference, in gathering together European and global actors, would bring substantial value to Scotland's reputation in the EU policy sphere.

9. European Offices

Since 2016, the Scottish Government has opened new representative offices in the rest of Europe, establishing Innovation and Investment Hubs in Dublin, Berlin and Paris. It also created an office in London and expanded its long-standing representation in Brussels. These offices constitute an essential base for the government's bilateral and multilateral engagement. They do not focus solely on trade and investment – as the name might suggest – and instead cover political, economic, social and cultural affairs, depending on the local context. Such engagement on EU and bilateral matters is critical for ensuring and advocating Scotland's interests. This European Hubs Network is relatively new and will develop over time, in terms of the practice of the current Hubs and the potential for new Hubs in other parts of Europe. Considering their current roles and future evolution, the Scottish Government should rename these offices.

The Innovation and Investment Hubs in EU Member States should be rebranded as Scottish Government Representations. For instance, the Scottish Government Innovation and Investment Hub in Paris would become the Scottish Government Representation in France. The Brussels Hub should be formally renamed as the Scottish Government Delegation to the European Union. The formal name of the London office should be whatever is determined to be most suitable. For Brussels and London, the respective common names of Scotland House (Brussels) and Scotland House London should certainly be retained. These revised names are entirely compatible with Scotland's current constitutional position. Many non-state polities operate delegations and representations, and such terminology does not inherently imply diplomatic status. The renaming of these offices would provide greater clarity to external partners on their purpose, functions and importance. It would bring simplicity

given that, while a Hub is a unique name, it does not necessarily give sufficient indication of the representation's focus and weight. Moreover, the proposed names would facilitate greater identification and association of the representations directly with the Scottish Government, in addition to offering a degree of nominal refinement. Scotland is entitled to project distinct perspectives on European and international issues, and this renewed naming for its European representations would be sensible.

10. Scotland: European Nation

Scotland's Europeanness span all its national characteristics – politics, economy, history, culture, geography and more. These credentials will not change with the eventual outcome of Brexit. The people of Scotland have equally expressed their clear desire to remain part of the European Union. The duality of European identity and dedication to European unity is a powerful combination. In recognition of this reality and the challenges posed by Brexit, the Scottish Government should give sustained consideration to the best means of providing representation to these two core national attributes over the long term. Such review would include how Scotland's European vocation relates to the main aspects of government, and the role of Europe in the primary messages that the Scottish Government aims to offer to people within and outwith Scotland. It should remain open to innovative ideas which might emerge.

The Scottish Government should create a government mission statement entitled *Scotland: European Nation*. As a call to action, it would represent a direct manifestation of Scotland's European roots and its pro-Europeanism. The intention would be to give Europe symbolic prominence and practical application across the work of the Scottish Government. European Nation should not become only a campaign of fixed duration, but a permanent commitment to further integrating European affairs, dimensions and thinking into the government's ethos. Enhanced synergies from increased European partnerships and ideas would benefit government policy and activity. To all the actors whom the Scottish Government encounters, in Europe and around the world, this message would demonstrate the value which Scotland places on its European connections. Scotland: European Nation would showcase support for the foundational principles of the European Union and make evident that Scotland elects to remain part of the European project, whatever the UK's future relationship with the EU.

Summary: Ten Priority Actions For Scotland's European Relations

In summary, the Scottish Government should implement these ten Priority Actions to protect and develop Scotland's European relations in the face of Brexit:

1. Create a European Citizens' Charter, founded on commitments, values, rights and connections, for European nationals in Scotland
2. Establish a National Conversation on Europe to promote public debate in Scotland on the major challenges facing Europe
3. Make Europe Day (9 May) a public holiday in Scotland to celebrate European unity and shared European values
4. Display the European flag alongside the Saltire at government buildings and in its activities, incorporating it into its visual identity
5. Build stronger relationships with the Scottish diaspora in Europe, including the educational diaspora of prominent graduates
6. Develop targeted engagement plans for EU Council presidencies to connect Scotland's priorities to the EU agenda
7. Begin a European Friendship Year initiative promoting Scotland's links with a different European country or region annually
8. Underwrite a new major annual European policy conference in Scotland to establish a signature event in the European calendar
9. Rename the Innovation and Investment Hubs in European states as Scottish Government Representations, and in Brussels as the Scottish Government Delegation to the European Union
10. Designate a mission statement of *Scotland: European Nation* to build a European dimension into the government's ethos

Conclusions

Departure from the European Union, in whatever timescale or circumstance, would significantly damage Scotland's society. The Priority Actions for the Scottish Government outlined in this report would serve to better protect Scotland's European relations, alongside the existing efforts of government and wider society. These recommendations are bold and would require degrees of ambition. Nevertheless, they are feasible and grounded in Scotland's mainstream Europeanism. In implementing these measures, the Scottish Government should communicate them effectively to the EU institutions and the Member States, in Brussels and in capitals, to ensure their broadest reception and greatest impact. Particularly where these recommendations are undertaken collectively, Scotland could significantly enhance its standing in the European policy sphere.

As a European nation, Scotland must have the confidence to articulate powerfully its mainstream European identity. In the British political context, symbols such as Europe Day and the European flag are undoubtedly viewed as partisan. Scotland does not have to be defined by this negative Eurosceptic worldview. Instead, it can bypass the UK level's difficulties with the EU and embrace the normality of European cooperation and friendship shared across the Union. While it will have to be realistic about the challenges posed by Brexit and the UK's dysfunctional constitution, Scotland can maintain a distinct message of its steadfast support for the values of European unity.

The Priority Actions set out in this report would benefit Scotland's European interests, regardless of the ultimate destination of Brexit. Where prolonged debate over a future EU-UK relationship would generate years of uncertainty, these measures alongside others would provide anchors of stability in Scottish European relations. Should the UK remain in the EU, they would ensure that Scotland was continuously well integrated into the European project. Should Scotland become independent, these recommendations would be fundamental steps to building a successful European profile as a state. A core recurrent theme of the report is the importance of sustaining relationships with the EU Member States and the EU institutions, and indeed other European constituents, through engagement on policy fields beyond Brexit. The Scottish Government's recent [Arctic Policy Framework](#) represents one of many promising fields for such cooperation, given the strategic importance of the Arctic to the EU.

Scotland's Europeanism is a valuable resource and the significance of the commonality which it provides in the EU should not be underestimated. The best opportunities to protect Scotland's European relations rest in channelling its mainstream Europeanism into practical measures which resonate with fellow Europeans. A renewed European strategy would enable the Scottish Government to engage even more effectively in the EU. In declaring itself a stakeholder in the future of Europe, Scotland could more fully realise its European potential and maintain its connection to the spirit of Europe.

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