

SUBMISSION FROM ANTHONY SALAMONE – MANAGING DIRECTOR, EUROPEAN MERCHANTS

This note contributes to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee's roundtable evidence session on 15 June 2023 on the Scottish Government's promotion of trade and culture, connected to its related inquiry.

General Approach

1. On trade, culture and other dimensions of European and global affairs, it is essential that the Scottish Government operate on the basis of credible and effective strategy. Such strategy should be grounded in the post-Brexit realities facing Scotland and the wider UK, based on Scotland's current constitutional settlement and insulated from Scotland's internal debates on independence. The Scottish and UK Governments should endeavour to transcend their political and policy differences to represent and promote Scotland effectively in the world.
2. The global arena is a crowded space in which many states and sub-states seek to promote themselves – including to increase trade and by means of leveraging culture. To be successful, the Scottish Government requires clear principles and realistic objectives for European and international engagement. The Government and wider Scotland should define Scotland's unique strengths and offerings. The recent European Merchants insight report, [Connecting Scotland to the World](#), sets out proposals to support a strategic approach to external engagement.

Trade Considerations

3. The Scottish Government should confirm that its organisational structure is best placed to support trade promotion and relations. At present, the External Affairs Directorate and the International Trade and Investment Directorate are separate. These directorates could be merged, which could facilitate integrated work and better suit Scotland's size. Given that the Scottish Government does not have competence on foreign policy (of the UK), trade would presumably be a central focus of the External Affairs Directorate in any case. Whatever arrangements are in place, trade should be interconnected with other aspects of external affairs.
4. The Scottish and UK Governments should ensure that their trade promotion in relation to Scotland is well coordinated and complementary. In particular, they should facilitate synergies between the UK Government's GREAT Campaign and the Scottish Government's Scotland Is Now campaign. Current and future trade partners (whether state or non-state actors) should be clearly guided on whom to contact for what purpose across the two administrations in respect of trade and investment concerning Scotland. On trade matters and wider policy matters, external partners can become confused where the two governments compete with each other to represent Scotland or work in different directions.
5. The Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government should determine how they wish to reflect values in Scottish trade policy in practice. Domestic policy goals related to the environment and labour rights should be mirrored in external trade policy. Trade relations with fellow democracies might be another priority.

Culture Considerations

6. The Scottish Government should approach culture promotion as a vehicle to facilitate the alignment of Scotland's values, interests and policies in the global arena. In that sense, Scottish culture can serve as a catalyst for productive and successful outcomes related to Scotland's values (such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights) and Scotland's interests (such as greater (equitable) trade and investment). Culture should not be viewed as a separate domain from wider external affairs. In other words, culture promotion should not be focused solely on encouraging tourism or festival attendance. Instead, culture should be considered a promising gateway to multifaceted relationships and partnerships with European and international actors on matters of importance for Scotland.
7. A core feature of the Scottish Government's culture policy should be diaspora relations. The Government should favour a holistic approach to the Scottish global diaspora which takes a broad definition of "the diaspora" and interacts with it across culture, trade, tourism, migration and other subjects. The Scottish Government's recent diaspora policy, the *Scottish Connections Framework*, adopts such an approach in large measure. The nexus between culture and the diaspora, where appropriately fostered, can support the delivery of wider policy objectives, such those on foreign direct investment and democracy promotion.
8. The Scottish Government should ensure that culture promotion is well integrated into the work of its representative offices in the rest of Europe and the wider world. Scotland has significant soft power attributes and strengths, which are focalised around "culture" in a general sense. Rather than remain at the first level of cultural promotion (such as tourism and festivals), the ambition should be to marshal Scotland's soft power to further its values and interests in its external engagement. Scotland's culture and soft power exist, whether they are deployed adroitly by the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government or not. In many instances, global non-state actors draw on Scotland's culture for their own gain. At this stage, Scotland's soft power advantages should be fully integrated into any European and international affairs strategy and maximised accordingly.

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