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Clare Adamson MSP
Convener of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

18th August 2025

Dear Clare,

Thank you for your letter of 27 June 2025 regarding sporting events of National interest. Firstly, let me take the opportunity to thank the Committee for its continued commitment and valued work on this important matter.

As you may be aware from what the Scottish Government has set out on this issue, and which I have set out in the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government recognises the public support for increased coverage of Scottish football games and we would like a wider range of Scottish sport to be broadcast.

Our view is that women and men's international football matches should be part of the listed events regime of free-to-air sporting events. This is a matter that the Scottish Government has previously argued for, including in our representations on the draft Media Bill. We will continue to strongly support expanding the offer for audiences to enjoy Scottish international football and other major sporting events on free-to-air broadcast TV.

As you are aware, broadcasters are independent from government and the right to broadcast sport is subject to commercial arrangements between broadcasters and the rights holders. Although the Scottish Government cannot influence access rights, and the listed events regime is the responsibility of the UK Government, we maintain a close interest in audience and stakeholder views in Scotland and we meet regularly with representatives of the regulator Ofcom and the broadcasters to urge them to consider how they can ensure that audiences in Scotland receive the best possible level of service.

As you highlighted in your letter, the BBC has agreed a deal to broadcast all Scotland's men's international football matches in the run-up to the FIFA Men's World Cup 2026. While programming decisions are for the BBC, the Scottish Government recognises the public support for increased coverage of Scottish football games and we welcome this outcome, which is great news for the many football fans across Scotland.

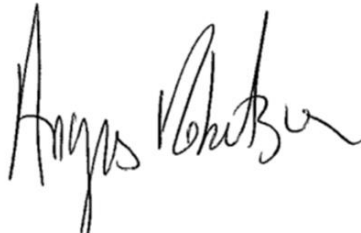
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While this outcome is a positive step, this does not, as you set out in your letter, offer a long term solution to the issue. It is our view that a fairer and more representative approach is required for the long term. That is why we continue to maintain a close interest in audience and stakeholder views in Scotland, and I and my Ministerial colleagues will continue to represent Scottish interests across broadcasting and sport so that Scottish audiences are receiving the best possible service now and into the future. The Scottish Government remains focussed on representing those interests in our engagement with broadcasters, Ofcom and the UK Government.

In coming to a conclusion on what a longer term approach might look like, we do also need to be cognisant of the income from the sale of television rights which the Scottish FA receives and which is used to support the growth and development of the game in Scotland, and the right balance needs to be struck between the ability of rights holders to generate income to support their sport and the accessibility of sporting events for television viewing.

As I have set out in the Scottish Parliament, we could consider these matters more fully if the Scottish Parliament was in charge of broadcasting. We strongly believe that broadcasting decisions which impact audiences, and wider culture and sport in Scotland, should be determined by the Scottish public through the Scottish Parliament.

Yours sincerely,



ANGUS ROBERTSON

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