



Scotland in Europe

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“Scotland in Europe” is not an empty phrase. Scotland is “in Europe” whether we like it or not. Scotland has always been “in Europe” and has benefited enormously from its contacts and connections there from the earliest mediaeval times.

These intimate social and economic links were forcibly broken by the formation of the United Kingdom, which turned Scotland’s continental friends into political enemies and redirected Scotland’s vision to the south, and eventually overseas, away from Europe, until the manic era of imperialism burned itself out.

True to Scotland’s centuries-old tradition, however, the SDA stands for a vigorous renewal of active participation by Scotland in European affairs.

The exact nature of that participation is now under review. As part of the UK, Scotland has shared the UK’s membership of all the major European political and economic institutions. But times have changed. This European network has become simply a regional subsidiary of our new and still developing global political and economic system.

The UK’s withdrawal from the sub-regional European Union group, as a result of the referendum on 23 June 2016, has now fundamentally changed the overall situation from Scotland’s perspective, but not to the extent of altering the wider goal of collaboration on a European regional basis.

The rash of European institutions that have emerged since World War 2 (the “new European political architecture”), and the current prospect of further widening the present restricted western

European institutional framework onto a broader Eurasian basis of economic cooperation, make it imperative that Scotland should clarify its position in relation to continental Europe in the event of independence.

The emphasis on political and economic institutions is necessary in the context of a proposal for Scotland's future government policy, but it should not be allowed to overshadow the fact that Scotland will in any event continue to enjoy a multitude of personal and communal links with continental European countries of a social, economic and cultural nature. This is as it should be, and in considering the structure of formal relations at institutional level the SDA is not losing sight of the fact that it is by no means the whole story.

Scotland's Place in Europe

Geographically, Europe extends from the Atlantic to the Urals. Scotland's sphere of interest on the continent has traditionally encompassed Scandinavia and the Baltic region, the Duchy of Burgundy and the Low Countries, now the Netherlands and Belgium. The numerous trading links, two-way migration and dynastic marriages with these countries are one of the most prominent features of Scottish history down through the centuries.

During the High Middle Ages it was monks from Scotland and Ireland who evangelised Europe right into the depths of Russia, as is shown to this day by the innumerable Scots Monasteries and Scots Churches that still exist all over the continent. The names of Kant, Keith, Loudon and many other Scots and their descendants who gained prominence in European history are revered to this day.

Not too much should be made of the so-called Auld Alliance with France, which although it lasted for two and a half centuries was largely a product of the traditional French foreign policy of surrounding France's enemies (in this case England) with a ring of steel through treaties with surrounding smaller states. It rarely worked to Scotland's advantage, and it resulted in the disaster of Flodden in 1513 after the English invaded France and Scotland's treaty obligation to support France led to military catastrophe. That French policy was later abandoned, in the 1920s and 1930s, in favour of European integration, organised in such a manner as to protect France's political and economic interests.

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Now that the relatively short 300-year “British” episode – relative to Scotland’s 1,500-year history as a political entity – is nearing its end, it is time to review the nation’s relationship with the neighbouring continent of Europe and the European states.

This must be approached in the light of first principles as well as of the emerging new European “political architecture”, the development of which is very far from being at an end.

The starting point must be Scotland’s geographical, and hence geo-economic and geo-political situation, which governs all other considerations.

Topographically, Scotland is a typical Scandinavian country. In round figures, it has approximately 12,000 kilometres of coastline, with some 130 inhabited islands, and a land frontier of only 150 km, running for the most part over uninhabitable mountainous country. There are only two main land routes into and out of it, on the east and west coasts, as if Scotland were joined to a neighbouring island by two causeways.

Settlement is largely on coastal strips, river valleys and fjords, with vast areas of uninhabitable mountains in between. The geographical latitude, and a location on the north-east Atlantic seaboard, determine Scotland’s typically Scandinavian climate and weather, which affect large areas of economic and social policy.

This geographically detached location, borne out by centuries of history, dictates that Scotland’s links in the first instance ought to be with its Nordic neighbours, who share the problems, and the possibilities for cooperation, of the same physical environment.

It is therefore SDA policy that Scotland should apply for membership of the **Nordic Council** and enhance its links with its Nordic neighbours. In particular, after the unmitigated disaster of the unwarranted – and originally even illegal – EU intervention in the region, we consider it imperative that the administration of the north-east Atlantic waters should be vested in a partnership of Scotland, the Faeroes, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Greenland.

Furthermore, the SDA considers that Scotland should apply for associate membership or at least observer status within the **Arctic Council**, on the ground that Scotland's territorial waters are the only ones of a non-member that border on the Council's sea area.

Close sub-regional cooperation, e.g. within the so-called **British Isles**, including the Republic of Ireland, is dealt with in a separate policy statement. This should take place parallel to participation in a relatively loose all-European system of cooperation.

Cooperation on an all-European Basis

The issue of broader European cooperation is more complex. Unlike other regions of the world, which are mostly represented by single organisations, Europe has a number of major organisations with specialised fields of operation but partly overlapping functions.

The principal ones with which Scotland has to concern itself at the time of writing are the 47-member **Council of Europe** (CoE), the 56-member **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe** (UNECE), the 57-member **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe** (OSCE), the 27-member **European Union** (EU), the 30-member **European Economic Area** (EEA), the 4-member **European Free Trade Association** (EFTA), and the 28-member + 22-partner **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation** (NATO).

This "political architecture" is still in a state of flux, and considerable changes must be anticipated over time. Much of the work that these organisations are carrying out is transitional in nature, and when that transition to a more permanent European situation has been completed will no longer justify the existence of the institutions concerned, at least in their present form.

The work of the **Council of Europe** is largely timeless, especially the European Court of Human Rights, which will remain essential as an ultimate appeal instance from national courts.

The others must, however, be expected to lose a large part of their justification when the effects of the Second World War and the Communist system have been overcome, when political conditions are finally stable, the transcontinental infrastructure is complete and economic differences and production costs have been largely evened out.

Another vital point is the extent to which the rapid development of global political and economic institutions, especially the **World Trade Organisation** (WTO), and the accelerating transfer of political and economic decision making to global level, has rendered corresponding European institutions superfluous. There is a body of opinion in Europe, especially Scandinavia, that even the so-called **European Economic Area** (EEA) is no longer necessary, because the WTO rules provide sufficient protection and regulation.

A considerable proportion of legislation by the **European Union** (over 80% has been asserted by some sources) is simply taken over from dozens of institutions higher up the global order and presented as its own under the EU "common policies" rule. Since all the EU member states are also members of the relevant global authorities anyway, this middleman role is clearly superfluous and simply duplicates functions that would apply to the member states directly even if the EU had never existed.

Another effect is that EFTA/EEA members like Iceland and Norway have much more power of decision making at the expanding global sources of legislation than any EU member state, since they are free to represent themselves at the original sources of the rules and are not bound by the centralised EU line there. They are therefore in a position to influence the global policies before they are passed down to the sub-regional EU. The large proportion of European states that are not in the EU naturally enjoy the same right of direct participation in the formulation of global legislation at its sources.

Advancing globalisation of political and economic decision making is already a fact with which Scotland has to contend. One important aspect is the current plan to form **a combined area of economic cooperation covering both Europe and Asia**. The Eurasian project is already at an advanced level of study, spearheaded by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA).

This important initiative would not only put **Russia and the Eurasian Economic Community** (EAEC) onto a level with the western European economic system, but would obviously play a vital role in stabilising the political situation. Work is proceeding on the plan, which also opens up new markets and breathtaking prospects for Scotland. Scottish membership of IIASA would therefore be highly desirable in order to ensure that Scottish interests are fully represented in such developments.

Active Cooperation at Continental Level

In the light of the meanwhile very fluid interim situation, and of the various possible developments, the **Scottish Democratic Alliance** advocates Scottish membership of all of the existing European regional institutions with the obvious exception of the so-called European Union.

None of this is intended to deny the undoubted benefits that the EU has brought to continental countries in some fields, and especially the good work it has carried out in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, but the balance of considerations for Scotland's purposes is that membership is, and in the EU's present transient form will remain, contrary to Scotland's interests in the longer term.

The 27-member European Union (EU) is half the size of the major European regional organisations and, with the ongoing withdrawal of the UK from membership, now represents just under half of the total number of European states, and of the overall European population. **The sub-regional EU is not "Europe" in any sense** and should never be described as such. Such a false usage is a clear indication of an underlying political intention to develop the EU into a centralised western European state, which is underlined by current proposals to establish an EU army and other armed forces.

The centrally organised and flagrantly dictatorial destruction of two thirds of the **Scottish fishing industry** for the benefit of richer EU members, (with half of the remaining third now in foreign ownership), as well as gross mismanagement in Brussels, has reduced Scotland's wealth-creation capacity by considerably more than £2,500 million *every single year* as well as destroying tens of thousands of jobs, killing an entire way of life, and destroying centuries-old fishing communities and cultural traditions

EU membership has been, and continues to be, Scotland's worst economic disaster for centuries. In fact, the notorious highland clearances have now been repeated in fishing towns and villages all round the coast through EU vandalism.

The SDA insists that this economic haemorrhage has to stop, and that all consideration of future Scottish membership of the political EU be dropped forthwith.

Scotland's European Policy

Scotland's national interests are those of an offshore island in the sub-arctic north-east Atlantic, and do not necessarily coincide with those of landlocked Central and Eastern Europe.

We cannot envisage how the interests of landlocked Central European states, or those of climatically very different Southern Europe, can be reconciled with the dissimilar interests of countries on the sub-arctic seaboard of the north-east Atlantic within a system that decrees one set of regulations to govern all of them.

The SDA reiterates its commitment to cooperation in Europe, and to the European ideals, but at the same time is determined that Scotland's rights and interests are going to be upheld in the process.

The SDA foresees no problems arising with Scottish membership of **the four major European institutions**, which are all-European in membership and inter-governmental in operation. Their parliaments have genuine decision making powers, and have considerably more democratic legitimacy in that they consist of delegated members of national parliaments who report back to, and can be held responsible by, their national legislatures.

Any economic advantages of the European Union can be realised through Scottish membership of the **European Free Trade Association** (EFTA), which would also include membership of the so-called **European Economic Area** (EEA).

Despite its misleading title (it includes less than half of Europe in its membership) the EEA does encompass all of the EU member countries. The economic benefits of the **EEA** would be further enhanced by membership of **EFTA's free trade agreements with over 60 countries worldwide, including the other half of Europe that is not in the EU.**

The **EEA** provides open access to the **EU Single Market** (EEA) as well as the European research and development facilities, allows participation in drafting EU legislation, leaves Scotland its own fishing and agriculture policies and more, and provides all the economic benefits that Scotland needs.

The EEA is in effect the Common Market continuing, which is the limit to what was approved by the Scottish voters in the 1975 referendum. No degree of European integration beyond this has, or ever had, any democratic legitimacy in Scotland.

One **propaganda myth** has to be dispelled here. It is untrue that the EFTA side of the EEA has to accept all the EU economic legislation as it stands without consultation. **Under Articles 99 to 101 of the EEA Agreement the EFTA members of the EEA have exactly the same rights as its EU members** as regards participation in the drafting of economic legislation. This includes alterations to existing EU regulations, and membership of relevant EU Commission committees.

EFTA/EEA membership would allow **the unhindered restoration of the Scottish fishing industry** and other wealth creators that are presently being strangled by EU ideology. It would **free Scottish agriculture** from the Brussels straitjacket. This move alone could result in a substantial rejuvenation of the Scottish economy.

A move to the EFTA side of the EEA, from Scotland's present part-membership of the EU/EEA side, **would cause no disruption whatever to Scotland's economic links with Europe**, which would continue unchanged in respect of the EU and be otherwise enhanced through EFTA. No action would be required to leave the EU side of the EEA – **since Scotland as such has never been a member of the EU it only needs to refrain from applying to join.**

We must make it clear, however, that EEA membership through EFTA is possible only if Scotland has full independent status with membership of the United Nations, and also preferably of the Council of Europe (CoE).

It must also be pointed out that EFTA/EEA membership is not a practical solution in the event that the rest-UK after Scottish independence remains outside the EEA. We simply cannot afford to erect any kind of barrier between Scotland and a country that takes around 65% of Scotland's exports. Much depends, however, on the actual outcome of the future Brexit negotiations.

There is no possibility of attaining full negotiator status as a region of the UK, although full consultation will certainly be necessary. Constitutional independence recognised by the international community through the United Nations is the precondition for any further advances in this field. Furthermore, even an independent Scotland would never be accepted by the EU so long as its debt to GDP ratio runs at over 9%, the highest ratio of all the EU member states and three times the size of the 3% upper limit set by the EU.

As we indicate in the present tentative policy proposals by the **SDA**, it is right and proper to prepare plans for action along different lines of possible future developments, but always bearing in mind the reality of the moment, which is that Scotland can take no practical steps on its own behalf until a more definite picture emerges of what the rest of the present United Kingdom is going to achieve through the forthcoming Brexit negotiations.

Our Conclusions

The human world is presently shaking down towards what may well be a permanent form of global political and economic organisation that will provide a basis for all the foreseeable future. Since, however, the immediate situation must be expected to remain fluid for some time to come, active foreign and economic policies must remain adaptable in the light of shorter-term developments.

The lessons for Scotland in the shorter term are therefore clear: For the moment at least, we cannot afford to stay outside the European and prospective Eurasian economic systems, and the last thing we need is barriers of any kind.

Scotland's special geo-economic situation, and the resulting divergence of interests from those of landlocked continental countries, dictates an individual approach to integration in Europe or a wider Eurasian field.

One possibility now being discussed in informed circles all over Europe is **differential integration**, rather than the likes of the monolithic EU structure. This would mean that membership terms would be tailored to the specific needs of individual countries. How far this is practicable, and likely to be realised, remains to be seen. The EEA without EU membership would, however, be a first step in this direction – as soon as we reach the point when it could become practical politics.

In the longer term these developments could free the core EU members with land borders in central Europe to realise a closer degree of union like the EU among themselves, leaving Scotland and others in an outer circle to adopt a looser form of integration more suited to their special needs.

The **Scottish Democratic Alliance** is keeping all such possibilities and developments under close scrutiny, but its current policy for **Scotland in Europe after constitutional independence** must be based on existing reality rather than a hypothetical future situation. That reality dictates the following in the shorter term:

1. Scottish membership of all of the major intergovernmental European organisations: Council of Europe (**CoE**); United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (**UNECE**); Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (**OSCE**); and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (**NATO**).
2. Scottish membership of the European Economic Area (**EEA**) through membership of the European Free Trade Association (**EFTA**), to be implemented if and/or when circumstances permit.
3. Scottish membership of the **Nordic Council** and the development of close cooperation with Scotland's Scandinavian neighbours, especially as regards the management of the north-east Atlantic. An association with the **Arctic Council** would also be desirable from the point of view of fisheries and other maritime matters.
4. Prospective Scottish membership of other specialised European organisations (European Space Agency, CERN, The North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, etc.) to be a matter of current policy.
5. No application to join the European Union (**EU**) in its present form, which is inimical to Scottish interests on a number of grounds and would certainly be incompatible with economic and other relations with the post-Brexit rest-UK after Scottish independence. In view of the EU's supranational objectives, and the drastic loss of sovereignty these would involve, any such move would require the approval of the Scottish people in an exhaustively informed referendum.

6. It is understood that the result of the UK's Brexit negotiations with the EU will inevitably have an effect on Scotland's and Ireland's own positions in relation to continental Europe. This may result in modifications to the above policy statement by the **Scottish Democratic Alliance** - without, however, altering its overlying strategic objectives.
7. Positive action by Scotland towards significant constitutional change is not likely to be practical politics for several years, pending the outcome of the Brexit negotiations at UK level. While this tentative policy statement has been compiled in the light of an assumed future confederal arrangement of autonomous states within the British Isles, that structure is not going to be attained overnight. **In the shorter term it is therefore essential that the next few years should be utilised constructively to build up Scotland's fund of expertise on foreign policy and international diplomacy, which is dangerously deficient at present, coupled with the application of as many aspects of policy (e.g. devolution of fisheries) as can be implemented on an advanced devolved basis of transferred powers just short of full constitutional independence.**
8. There is unlikely to be any clear road ahead for several years, but one overriding objective must be to avoid creating a hard economic border between Scotland and its neighbours in the rest-UK and the British Isles generally. This will call for compromise and consensus by all the relevant negotiators, which should include Scottish representatives at all stages.

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