

FRIENDS OF SCOTLAND DINNER

Key message	<p>I wish to thank you all and underline how important this group is for Scotland. Your friendship and support have been very welcome in this difficult pre- and post-Brexit period.</p> <p>I want to emphasise the following:</p> <p>Scotland remains a European nation and shares the fundamental values of the EU.</p> <p>Scotland’s desire is to continue to work very closely with EU partners despite Brexit.</p> <p>Scotland has much to offer the EU, including on the big strategic challenges the EU faces, for example, firstly, on renewable energy and green hydrogen, secondly, our science higher education and research sector, thirdly our experience on the well-being economy.</p> <p>Given that we cannot rejoin ERASMUS+ at the current time, we have just announced a pilot programme which will offer staff and learners further opportunities for education mobility exchange.</p>
What	A short speech before the dinner followed by discussion.
Why	This an opportunity to thank the members of the Friends of Scotland group and to ensure their continued support.
Who	<p>MEPs:</p> <p>Udo Bullmann (German, socialist group);</p> <p>Terry Reintke (German, green group);</p> <p>Danuta Hübner (Polish, centre right);</p> <p>Nathalie Loiseau (French, liberals group);</p> <p>Zeljana Zovko (Croatian, centre right);</p> <p>Frances Fitzgerald (Irish, centre right);</p> <p>Diana Riba I Giner (Spanish, Catalan, European lefts);</p> <p>Urmas Paet (Estonia, liberals).</p>
Where	Park Side Brasserie
When	Tuesday 27 June 2023, 20.00
Likely themes	EU-UK relationship; and Scotland’s priorities (domestic and international).
Media	Tweet for @ScotGovFM/ScotGovBrussels.

Supporting official	Martin Johnson, EUD Director
Attached documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary 2. Agenda 3. Biographies 4. Speaking points 5. Recent engagement

1. Summary

- The Friends of Scotland group is as an informal network of MEPs representing different political groups of the European Parliament with the objective of helping to facilitate dialogue on areas of mutual interest, and to ensure as close a relationship as possible between Scotland and the EU.
- The group is neutral with regards to Scotland's constitutional status within the UK and the UK's future relationship with the EU.
- The aims of the group are:
 - promoting stronger economic, social and cultural relations between the EU and Scotland
 - encouraging cooperation and understanding in key areas that relate to both the EU and Scotland such as climate change, the green deal, wellbeing economy, international development/SDGs, the Arctic, etc. and the future EU-UK relationship
 - helping to maintain links between elected Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and MEPs
 - facilitating links between the EU and Scottish Civil Society
- The Scottish Government's Brussels Office provides a secretariat function to support the running of the group.
- This event provides an opportunity for you to thank the group for their enduring support and build new relations with a group of influential MEPs.

2. Agenda

- Member of European Parliament (MEP) Udo Bullmann (DE, Socialist and Democrat group) to welcome First Minister and MEPs for 3-4 minutes
- MEP Terry Reintke (DE, Greens Group) to speak for 3-4 minutes
- First Minister to speak for 5-7 minutes
- Martin Johnson EUD to give the floor to other MEPs who are free to ask questions and make comments.

3. Biographies

Terry (Theresa) Reintke



Terry REINTKE, Co-Chair of Friends of Scotland Group

Vice-Chair of the Greens/EFA Group, German. Member of the EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly and a founding member of the Friends of Scotland MEPs group. In 2021, Reintke initiated a letter to Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Education Commissioner Mariya Gabriel calling for Scotland and Wales' right to rejoin the European Union's Erasmus+ mobility scheme.


Co-president of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament [EP] and the group's coordinator for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. She is a founder and co-chair of the Friends of Scotland group.


Since 2021, Reintke has been part of the Parliament's delegation to the EU-UK Parliamentary Assembly, which provides parliamentary oversight over the implementation of the EU–UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.


In 2021, she joined forces with MEPs David McAllister and Radoslaw Sikorski to initiate a letter signed by 145 members of the EP to Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Education Commissioner Mariya Gabriel in calling for Scotland and Wales to be able to rejoin the European Union's Erasmus+ mobility scheme.



She has a strong affiliation with Scotland having spent time studying political science at the University of Edinburgh through an Erasmus exchange in 2014. She has often worn Tartan as a statement in European Parliament plenary sessions and was one of the initiators of the "leave a light on for Scotland" campaign.

Ms Reintke had been very keen to visit Glasgow for COP26 in November 2021. Her trip was cancelled

	<p>due to post-election German coalition talks she was involved in.</p> <p>Ms Reintke has often met with Scottish Government officials and Ministers. She met with Cabinet Secretary Robertson and Ms McKelvie in Edinburgh in June 2022.</p>
<p>Udo Bullman</p> 	<p>German MEP, Socialist and Democrats Co-Chair of Friends of Scotland Group. German member of Socialist and Democrats group (centre left). Member of Development, International Trade and Budget Committees. Frequent engagement with SG officials.</p> <p>Strong interest in Scotland and EU relationship. Other: EU vaccines strategy; EU trade policy, EU-Africa Strategy, climate and ecological emergencies, Sustainable Development Goals, EU budgets, EU social policy</p> <p>In 1999, Udo Bullmann was elected as a Member of the European Parliament, where he joined the Socialists & Democrats (S&D) group. Since his election, Udo served on the economic and monetary affairs (ECON) committee. In this work he has focused in particular on making financial markets fairer and more transparent, on fighting the misguided dogma of austerity policies, and on mobilising strategic investments in order to create sustainable growth and quality jobs in Europe.</p> <p>In 2019, Udo became member of the European Parliament's Committee on Development as S&D coordinator. He also is member of the International Trade committee and substitute in the Budget committee.</p> <p>From 2012 to 2017, Udo Bullmann led the German SPD delegation in the S&D Group until his election as first Vice-President of the S&D Group. As Vice-President responsible for economic and social model policy, Udo worked with fellow Group Vice-Presidents to implement a new approach to policy-making.</p>

	<p>This approach, which builds on the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, focusses on extensive, cross-committee policy coordination and engagement with civil society.</p> <p>Before becoming an MEP, the issue of European integration lay at the heart of Udo Bullmann's political and professional identity. A political scientist by training, he went on to earn a PhD and later on a Jean-Monet Professorship in European Studies at the University of Giessen. As part of his academic career, Udo also served as a visiting research fellow at Strathclyde University Glasgow.</p> <p>In January 2021, Mr Bullmann co-signed a letter (organised by Terri Reintke MEP) to President von der Leyen regarding Erasmus and the possibility of Scotland and Wales continuing to participate in aspects of the program.</p>
<p>Nathalie Loiseau</p> 	<p>French MEP, Renaissance and Renew Europe Member of the Friends of Scotland Group. She and her office have regular engagement with SG Ministers and officials. Strong interest in Scotland and EU relationship, and consequences of the TCA.</p> <p>MEP for French political party Renaissance (Macron's party). She was elected to the European Parliament in 2019 and sits in the centre-left Renew Europe group in the European Parliament (the Liberals). Loiseau was the French Minister for European Affairs from 21 June 2017 to 27 March 2019.</p> <p>Prior to her political career, Loiseau served as a diplomat for twenty years with postings in Indonesia, Senegal, and Morocco. She also served as the Communications Director at the Embassy of France, Washington, D.C.</p> <p>She is the Chair of the Delegation to the EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA). She is also Chair of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence and Vice-</p>

	<p>Chair of the Delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.</p> <p>She is a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; the Special Committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the EU.</p> <p>Previously met Minister Macpherson (Jan 2020), Minister Gilruth (June 2020), Cabinet Secretary Robertson (July 2021, January 2022 and May 2022), Mr Gray (November 2022).</p>
<p>Danuta Hübner</p> 	<p>Received her MSc in Economics, SGH Warsaw School of Economics (Central School of Planning and Statistics) in 1971, her PhD in economics, SGH Warsaw School of Economics 1974 Visiting scholar at the Centre for European Studies at the University of Sussex in 1974, and her post-doctoral degree in international trade relations, SGH Warsaw School of Economics in 1980. Hübner was a 1988–1990 Fulbright scholar at the University of California, Berkeley and received an honorary Degree in Laws of Sussex University in 2005.</p> <p>From 1 May 2004, Hübner was a Member of the European Commission. At the time of her nomination by Prime Minister of Poland Leszek Miller, her main competitor was fellow Convention member and former Prime Minister Józef Oleksy.</p> <p>In November 2004, Hübner was appointed Commissioner for Regional Policy in the European Commission led by President José Manuel Barroso. In this capacity, she represented the Commission at the funeral of Pope John Paul II in 2005.</p> <p>Between 2006 and 2007, Hübner served as member of the Amato Group, a group of high-level European politicians unofficially working on rewriting the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe into what became known as the Treaty of Lisbon.</p> <p>Hubner has been an MEP since 2009. She is the co-author of TCA report and has had frequent contact</p>

	<p>with Scottish Government officials and Ministers. Met previously during Cab Sec visit on 31 May 2022.</p>
<p>Diana Riba I Giner</p> 	<p>Spanish MEP, Greens/European Free Alliance From Catalonia, Spain. Besides being a Member of the Committee on Culture and Education, she is the Vice-Chair of the Committee of Inquiry to investigate the use of Pegasus and equivalent surveillance spyware a, a Member of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, the Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Committee.</p> <p>Riba I Giner sits with the Greens/European Free Alliance Group (the same group the SNP MEPs sat in), and with the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Spain).</p> <p>She has been the rapporteur for the report on identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in the TFUE and a shadow rapporteur for the report on the implementation of the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive. She is a shadow rapporteur for the report on the European Media Freedom Act.</p> <p>Riba is the partner of jailed Catalan Minister Raul Romeva, with whom she has two children.</p> <p>Riba I Giner met with Scottish Government officials in Strasbourg in April 2023. She was also one of the seven MEPs from the Culture and Education Committee visiting Edinburgh in June 2023. The delegation met with Cabinet Secretary Robertson and Ms McKelvie.</p>
<p>Frances Fitzgerald</p> 	<p>Irish MEP for Fine Gael, European People’s Party She previously served as Tánaiste from 2016 to 2017, Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation from June 2017 to November 2017, Minister for Justice and Equality from 2014 to 2016, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs from 2011 to 2014 and Leader of Fine Gael in the Seanad from 2007 to 2011. She served as a Teachta Dála (TD) from 1992 to 2002 and 2011 to 2019. She was also a Senator for the Labour Panel from 2007 to 2011.</p>

	<p>She was the second Fine Gael politician to ever hold the office of Tánaiste, after Peter Barry in 1987.</p> <p>The former First Minister met with Ms Fitzgerald when she was Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2016</p>
<p>Zeljana Zovko</p> 	<p>Croatian MEP for the European People's Party</p> <p>Zeljana Zovko is a Herzegovinian Croat diplomat and politician serving in the European Parliament since 2016.</p> <p>She was the resident ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to France from April 2004 to 2008. She then moved on as Bosnian ambassador to Spain between 2008 and December 2011.</p> <p>In 2012 until March 2015, Zovko served as foreign affairs advisor for the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina Vjekoslav Bevanda. In the same period, she also served as international secretary for Bosnia and Herzegovina of Croatia's HDZ party. From August 2015 till November 2016 Zovko served as ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Italy.</p> <p>In 2016, Zovko took up a place in the European Parliament as MEP for Croatia. Her switch of loyalties from the Bosnian diplomatic service to representing Croatian voters in the European Parliament raised criticisms in the press.</p> <p>Zovko was elected at the 2019 elections, and was appointed vice-chair and EPP vice-coordinator of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. She is Vice-Chair of the parliamentary delegation for relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo.</p> <p>In October 2020, she was elected as one of the vice chairs of the Foreign Affairs Committee. In October 2021, she was elected as one of the vice presidents of the EPP Group in the European Parliament.</p>

4. Discussion points

- The vast majority of MEPs that we have engaged with, Friends of Scotland members and otherwise, have expressed their deep regret at the loss of Scotland from the Erasmus+ programme. MEPs will be pleased to hear that Scotland are looking at a youth mobility scheme. Terry Reintke did her Erasmus in Edinburgh.
- The MEPs will be keen to hear about our announcement for an ERASMUS+ alternative pilot which seeks to offer staff and learners further opportunities for education mobility exchange and is open to supporting some inward mobility costs.

5. Recent engagement

Recent engagement with the Friends of Scotland group has focused on bilateral meetings, examples of these meetings over the last eight months include:

June 2023 – Mr Robertson met with Udo Bullman MEP to discuss EU-Scotland relations

May 2023 – Mr Robertson met with Urmas Paet MEP to discuss Arctic relations

December 2022 – Scotland House Brussels officials met with Hannes Heide MEP to discuss cultural cooperation between his home Bad Ischl (Austria) and Scotland

November 2022 - Mr Gray met with Nathalie Loiseau MEP to discuss EU-UK relations and her view on increasing the role of Scottish MSPs in the EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly

To note: following the breaking of the scandal in the European Parliament dubbed “Qatargate”, where several MEPs were accused of accepting money from the Qatari Government, activities of the Friends of Scotland group were put on pause for several months. This was due to European Parliament President Roberta Metsola announcing a “ban” on informal friendship groups within the European Parliament. Scotland House Brussels officials worked with Metsola’s office as well as with Friends of Scotland co-chairs Udo Bullmann MEP and Terry Reintke MEP to determine what this meant for Friends of Scotland and to clarify that it is an entirely transparent group. In a meeting with Mr Robertson in early June 2023, Udo Bullmann MEP said that Metsola had held up the Friends of Scotland group as an example of the type of friendship group MEPs should be involved in.

Examples of previous engagement with the Friends of Scotland group:

- November 2021 – 2 Friends of Scotland MEPs present at COP26
- July 2021 - FoS plenary Roundtable with Cabinet Secretary Robertson
- 3 March 2021 – First Friends of Scotland plenary session
- January 2021 – Udo Bullmann co-signed a letter (organised by Terri Reintke MEP) to President von der Leyen regarding Erasmus and the possibility of Scotland and Wales continuing to participate in aspects of the programme

- July 2020 – Scotland House Brussels Webinar - “A greener, more resilient and more inclusive recovery beyond the COVID-19 crisis” with former Scotland House Brussels Head, Mike Russell and Udo Bullmann MEP
- January 2020 – Inaugural Friends of Scotland meeting with SG Minister Ben Macpherson and MEPs.

The UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA) is the body formed by the UK and European Parliaments that provides a joint role in the formal institutional structures of the post-Brexit UK-EU relationship. It is composed of UK Members of Parliament meeting together with Members of the European Parliament, acting as a forum for parliamentarians to exchange views on the implementation and operation of the Agreement. **Nathalie Loiseau** is the Chair of the European Parliament Delegation to the PPA. The Rt Hon Sir Oliver Heald KC MP is the UK lead with The Earl of Kinnoull and Hilary Benn MP as vice chairs. The convenor and vice convenor of the CEEAC Committee represent the Scottish Parliament.

The Parliamentary Partnership Assembly meets next in Brussels on 3-4 July. We are planning significant Scottish input and officials are actively considering how best to support Scottish representatives and help drive progress.