

Annex A – Meeting note

ENGAGEMENT REPORT	
Minister	First Minister
Type of engagement	Bilateral Meeting with European Commission Vice-President
Date	28 June 2023
Attending Official(s)	Lindsay Appleby – UK Ambassador to the EU Martin Johnson – EU Director, Scottish Government Emily Mackintosh – Special Advisor
Who	EU Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič
Key Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FM emphasised Scotland’s ongoing commitment to the EU – to shared EU values, people to people links, and staying closely aligned to EU law where possible. • MS remarked about a trip to the Scottish parliament (organised by Sir John Grant) when MS was the Slovakian Perm Rep to the EU. • FM highlighted that Scotland has much to offer the EU – on renewable energy, science and innovation and our work on well-being economy (‘beyond GDP’). • FM welcomed the Windsor Framework, the personal contribution of MS, and the work of both negotiating teams. MS noted the EU had worked hard and at pace, for example with new legislation on medicines, SPS etc. • On renewables, MS noted the renewable potential of Scotland was ‘enormous’. There was also potential for carbon capture sub-sea. Green hydrogen would be important for energy intensive industries. MS also noted the importance of grid connections etc, and the step forward with the MoU signed between UK and EU on North Sea Energy Cooperation (NSEC). <i>25 words redacted under section 32.</i> • Also on energy, MS noted that progress on security of supply was a priority, and the TCA specialised committee was working on electricity trading arrangements. It was very demanding and technical but experts were working on it. • On the Horizon research programme FM underlined the importance of the programme to Scotland and what Scottish institutions could bring. He urged that pragmatic solutions be found and a deal agreed as quickly as possible. MS noted that discussion was ongoing, and that the EU sees programmes as a group. • FM also raised Erasmus and his sadness at Scotland (and whole of UK) now being outside. The Scottish Government would go ahead with a pilot scheme on how to seek to replicate the benefits. <i>23 words redacted under section 38 (1) (b)</i> • FM noted the SG desire to stay closely aligned with EU law where possible. <i>21 words redacted under section 32</i> • On Ukraine, the FM noted the work in Scotland to welcome refugees, and was also supportive of UK Government joint

	<p>work with the EU on facing down Russian aggression. MS said cooperation had been exemplary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FM discussed the Scottish well-being economy agenda, and membership of WEGO. [This area is covered as part of VP Sefcovic's work on the EU Foresight programme.] MS said the EU had been inspired by Ministers elsewhere. The EU Strategic Foresight report would be published next week. It would focus on aspects of well-being, and how we can bring assessment of economic performance more into line with 21st century priorities. We need alternative models. The FM suggested SG and the Commission could work together with partners on an event on well-being economy. MS said the Strategic Foresight report would be discussed at GAC in July and then at Heads of State meeting in Granada under the EU Spanish Presidency in autumn. <i>7 words redacted under section 32</i>• FM expressed the positive case for migration, <i>39 words redacted under section 32</i>
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Annex B – Briefing

28.06.2023 - MAROŠ ŠEFČOVIČ, EUROPEAN COMMISSION VICE-PRESIDENT

Key message/aims	<p>The Scottish Government is committed to continuing a close relationship with the EU despite Brexit.</p> <p>We welcome the agreement on the Windsor Framework, and the personal role the Vice-President has played. We hope that substantive, meaningful progress can be made this autumn and beyond on the TCA.</p> <p>Key Scottish interests in the TCA include legal association to Horizon Europe, and progress on SPS including issues facing Scottish exporters.</p> <p>Scotland has much to offer the EU – including in renewable energy. We have plans to expand north sea production including green hydrogen and aim to be a significant net exporter. This can help the EU meet its need for safe, secure supplies. [This will be of particular interest to the Vice-President as the former Energy Commissioner.]</p>
What	An introductory meeting between the First Minister and European Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič.
Who	Maroš Šefčovič , European Commission Vice President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight.
Where	Berlaymont
When	28 June 2023, 11.30-12.15
Likely themes	Scotland-EU relationship; UK-EU relationship; Horizon Europe Scotland's offer (hydrogen, wellbeing economy).
Media	Tweet for @ScotGovFM/ScotGovBrussels
Supporting official	Martin Johnson, SG EU Director Lindsay Appleby, UK Ambassador to the EU
Attached documents	1. Summary 2. Agenda 3. Biography 4. Top lines

1. Summary

Meeting with high profile EU figure, Commission Vice-President, Maroš Šefčovič, European Commission Vice President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight. Responsibilities include Co-chair and EU representative in the Partnership Council, established by the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This is the first face to face meeting with an EU Commissioner since February 2020, and the first of any kind since Spring 2021. Over the last two years the dispute on the Northern Ireland Protocol has meant dialogue between the EU Commission and any 'UK authorities' (including the Scottish Government) has been extremely limited and tightly controlled.

2. Agenda

This is a bilateral meeting with no set agenda.

3. Biography

<p>Maroš Šefčovič</p> 	<p>European Commission Vice-President for Inter-institutional Relations and Foresight</p> <p>Slovak diplomat and politician. He has been member of the European Commission since 2009. He is the EU's main interlocutor with the UK (via the Foreign Secretary). They are the two co-chairs of the TCA Partnership Council.</p> <p>He studied at the University of Economics in Bratislava and at the Moscow State Institute of International Affairs between 1985-1990.</p> <p>2019 – present: European Commission Vice-President for Inter-institutional Relations and Foresight</p> <p>2014-2019: European Commission Vice-President for the Energy Union and EU Space Policy</p> <p>2010-2014: European Commission Vice-President for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration</p> <p>2009-2010: European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth</p> <p>2004-2009: Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the EU</p>
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	<p>1999 – 2002: Ambassador of Slovakia to Israel</p> <p>1992 – 1995: Deputy Head, Czech and Slovak Federal Embassy to Canada</p> <p>1991-1992: Consul, Czech and Slovak Federal Embassy, Zimbabwe</p> <p>In 2019, he stood as a Slovakian Presidential Candidate but lost to Zuzana Chaputova, the current president of Slovakia.</p>
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4. Top lines

Introduction

- I am delighted to meet you during my first international engagement as First Minister. Over the course of my visit, I have been touched by the friendship and warmth that people here continue to show Scotland.
- [You may also wish to note that Cabinet Secretary Angus Robertson attended (virtually) the Partnership Council meeting in March this year, and SG participates routinely and constructively in TCA Specialised Committee structures.]

Scotland – EU relationship

- I am a proud Scot and a proud European too and many Scots would echo those words. Scotland is a European nation. We want to return to the EU. In the meantime, we remain committed to working closely with EU. We see EU founding values as Scottish values. Scotland sees itself as European and people in Scotland support us re-joining the EU - 70% in most recent poll. On Europe Day we had a debate in the Scottish parliament and lit up St Andrews House.

UK – EU relationship

- I would like to commend your personal contribution and efforts to agree the **Windsor Framework**. I welcome the work of the negotiating teams on both sides. The Scottish Government called for sustainable solutions and an end to the dispute on the Northern Ireland Protocol and we welcome the steps taken. However, the Windsor Framework is a step towards repairing UK-EU relations, but there should be no doubt: Brexit remains a generational disaster.
- **We want to see the damage of Brexit mitigated where that can be done.** I recognise the structure of the TCA means our relationship is not as close as the Scottish Government would have wished, but it is our hope that substantive, meaningful progress can be made this autumn, and beyond:

- On Horizon Europe association we would like to see an agreement concluded as quickly as possible. This is vital for Scotland research communities.
- On financial services – vital for Scotland – we are keen the MoU on dialogue structures between us is put into operation.
 - On SPS – we recognise that the Brexit approach chosen has inevitably introduced frictions. However, we are keen to explore what more we can do to enable products like seed potatoes and bi-valve molluscs to re-enter EU markets.
- On energy trading and connection we want to enhance our connections and energy links. The UK re-joining the MoU on North Sea cooperation was a step forward on that.
 - We need to see an improved framework for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, to include key sectors such as lawyers and further progress on architects.
- We are interested in scope to do more on youth mobility.
 - We would like to see a better solution for touring creative professionals, to overcome visa and cabotage restrictions – though recognise this is extremely complex.

Scotland's offer

As well as our shared values, Scotland has a lot to offer the EU:

Green energy – Scotland has huge renewables potential, including net export potential. We are focused on taking action to ensure Scotland is prepared to play a key role in meeting the growing European and global demand for hydrogen.

In December 2022, we published our Hydrogen Action Plan, which sets out our commitment to realise our export potential. We will also be working closely with industry and international partners over the coming months to develop our Hydrogen Export Plan. We are keen to develop renewable energy and hydrogen-specific partnerships to explore the development of the transnational value chains needed for the production of large scale hydrogen with potential export routes from Scottish ports into northern Europe.

- On **science and research** – our universities are among the best in the world and have been collaborating with European partners for centuries. We have a lot to offer and Horizon association can help maximise that.
 - For Scotland, we want to transition to a **wellbeing economy** - a fairer, greener, and growing economy that works for people and the planet, not the other way around.
- I understand that you will soon publish the **2023 Strategic Foresight Report** which will have an emphasis on beyond GDP indicators.
 - Scotland has already developed its own **Wellbeing Economy Monitor** to track broader outcomes beyond GDP across 14 indicators. Indicators cover

a range of socio-economic, environmental and health factors, including areas like wealth inequality, the gender pay gap, investment, greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity.

- We know from our leadership of the Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo) Network that likeminded partners are seeking **international leadership** to drive the transition to beyond growth models ahead of the UN Summit of the Future in September next year. What role could the EU play as a driver of the transition to wellbeing and beyond growth economies?