

Document 1.0 - Briefing pack for meeting with Høgni Hoydal

Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture – Angus Robertson

Faroese Flag Day Bilateral Meeting - Friday 26 April 2024

What	Bilateral Meeting with the Faroese Deputy Prime Minister in Edinburgh marking the celebration of Faroese Flag Day
Where	Radisson Blu Hotel, The Royal Mile, Old Town, Edinburgh, EH1 1TH
When	Friday 26 April 2024, 11:45-12:30
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We value our relationship with the Faroe islands, in particular our collaboration on blue economy.• We are keen to identify opportunities to diversify our links, for instance in relation to sustainable island policies, cultural projects and rural repopulation.• We are pleased to celebrate the Flag of the Faroe Islands and the historic links with Scotland.• We were pleased to host a strong delegation from the Faroe Islands in Shetland in May 2023 for a net-zero islands conference opened by Cabinet Secretary Gougeon.• We want to work with neighbours in the North Sea and North Atlantic regions to create mutual green energy security. Scotland has the potential to become a major exporter of green hydrogen.• Highlight the importance of the NORA network and the value of closer cooperation through our UNESCO designations and to discuss UNESCO sites as drivers for sustainable development.
Who	<p>Full biographies are available at Annex C.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Høgni Hoydal, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade• [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], Head of the Representation of the Faroe Islands to the UK• [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], adviser at the Foreign Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade• [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], secretary and political adviser at the Representation in London

Media	[REDACTED - Section 30(b)(i) - Free and frank provision of advice]
Supporting official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information]– Head of European Relations, DEXA - [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information] • [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information] – Policy Support, DEXA
Attached documents	Annex A – Background Information and sensitivities Annex B – Points for discussion Annex C – Biographies Annex D – Faroe Islands Country profile

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SENSITIVITIES

ANNEX A

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade, Høgni Hoydal, of the Faroese Parliament is in Edinburgh for a working visit from 25 to 26 April. Their programme revolves around engagements celebrating the Flag of the Faroe Islands. This year's Celebration takes place at the Edinburgh City Chambers, with a special focus on the close and long-standing ties between the Faroe Islands and Scotland. The DPM will also meet with Space Scotland and visit the Scottish Parliament.

The Faroese flag, Merkið, first designed and hoisted as a national banner in 1919, was officially recognised by the British Government on 25 April 1940 as the ensign of the Faroe Islands, shortly after British troops occupied the Faroe Islands during World War II. The 25th of April - Flag Day – is celebrated as a national holiday in the Faroe Islands.

Sensitivities

[REDACTED - Section 32(1)(a)(i) - Relations with other states]

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POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

ANNEX B

The Faroese have indicated they would like to discuss:

1. Exchange on political priorities in respective areas of responsibility
2. Cooperation in the Nordic and Arctic regions
3. Existing and future Faroese - Scottish cooperation: potential for focused bilateral arrangements

Bilateral relations

- We value our longstanding ties with the Faroes and welcome opportunities to build on these.
- Bilateral collaboration is particularly strong in the blue economy sector, chiefly fisheries and aquaculture.
- [REDACTED - Section 30(b)(i) - Free and frank provision of advice]

Net Zero Islands conference – Shetland, May 2023

- We were pleased to welcome a substantial Faroese delegation to the Net Zero Islands conference held in Lerwick in May. It was organised by SG together with Shetland Islands Council and Nordic Energy Research.
- I know that [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information]([REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information]– Head of Faroese Representation in London) was there and met my colleague Mairi Gourgeon, who opened the event.
- Helping island communities complete a just transition to net zero is a shared Scottish-Faroese priority and we would like to see greater collaboration on these issues.

New National Islands Plan

- As required by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and after an ambitious consultation exercise, Scotland's first National Islands Plan was published in December 2019.
- The National Islands Plan aims to meaningfully improve outcomes for island communities and provides the tools to help our islands thrive.
- Following a public consultation to inform a review of the first National Islands Plan, the Deputy First Minister announced on 23 April that work will commence on the development of a new plan to be published next year.
- We will engage with island communities, local authorities and our delivery partners to ensure the new plan meets their needs and supports their ambitions.
- We are also keen to learn from international best practices, including by building on the strong links we have established with Faroese partners.

Cultural links and International Culture Strategy

- I understand Scotland's Makar Kathleen Jamie participated as a keynote speaker in last July's Faroese G! Festival. She spoke on the cultural and historic connections between the Faroe Islands and Scotland, centred on the North Sea and being places of rurality and island communities.
- The Makar was joined by the Deputy Head of the Scottish Government office in Copenhagen.
- Work is underway to develop an International Culture Strategy to support the international aims and ambitions of Scotland's culture sector and was published in March 2024.
- Scotland's culture is a massive asset to our country, including in economic terms. It can also support Scotland's wider international relationships, including with the Faroe Islands and we would be happy to explore future collaborations.

Energy collaboration

- Scotland has a huge pipeline of renewable energy projects, especially in the offshore wind sector.
- We are committed to working with nations in our near neighbourhood to exchange expertise and create mutually reinforcing infrastructure and build green energy security.
- Scotland's huge renewable resources mean that we are well placed to become a major and trusted exporter of green hydrogen.
- By working together, we can build an interconnected North Sea and North Atlantic region, becoming a renewable battery for Europe.

Hydrogen

- Scotland has the resources, people and ambition to become a world leader in hydrogen production and our Hydrogen Action Plan sets out how we will work collaboratively with the energy sector to drive progress over the five years to 2026.
- The Action Plan is supported by a programme of capital investment to accelerate and maximise the production of renewable, green hydrogen in Scotland.
- This investment is aimed at driving Scotland's hydrogen production capability to meet an ambition of 5GW of renewable and low-carbon hydrogen by 2030 and 25GW by 2045. Delivery against this ambition will be supported by our reported potential offshore wind project pipeline of over 40GW capacity (subject to marine planning, consenting and finding a route to market).
- This will put us on the pathway to becoming a leading hydrogen nation by 2045 in the production of reliable, competitive, sustainable hydrogen.
- It will provide the potential to secure Scotland's future as a centre of international excellence as we establish the innovation, skills and supply chain that will underpin our energy transition.

- Scotland is strongly positioned to become a major exporter of hydrogen to Northern Europe and the UK. Scotland's offshore wind renewables could power green hydrogen production for export on a very large scale.

Offshore wind

- Scotland's natural resources, skilled offshore workforce, excellent port structure and strong innovation hub, make Scotland one of the best places in the world to develop offshore wind and its supply chain.
- ScotWind is the world's largest commercial round for floating offshore wind and puts Scotland at the forefront of offshore wind development globally.
- The INTOG leasing round is a 'first of its kind' with 13 successful applicants and is the next step in realising another world leading opportunity for Scotland's energy transition
- Expansion of our offshore wind generation capabilities in the coming years provides a fantastic opportunity to support an energy transition which not only delivers on our climate obligations, but which ensures a fair and just transition for the energy sector and wider industry
- We are committed to maximising the public benefits of our renewables revolution and we will explore all options open to us to do so.

Supply chain and jobs

- We are determined to maximise the economic opportunity for the Scottish supply chain from our offshore wind potential
- It is widely accepted that offshore wind represents a significant opportunity to create thousands of good Scottish jobs. We want to ensure a just transition that takes our existing skilled workforce and supply chain with us.
- We welcome the commitment of developers to invest an average projection of £1.5 bn in Scotland per project across the 20 ScotWind offshore wind projects.
- A Strategic Investment Model (SIM) has been established with the aim of enabling a move from project-led to sector level investment that better supports growth in port and supply chain capacity and capability.
- We will drive forward offshore wind skills development – working with stakeholders to focus on the opportunities for diversification and skills transfer from our oil and gas sector, in line with our commitment to a Just Transition.
- The Green Jobs Fund will make £100m of capital investment available to businesses and supply chains across Scotland to help create new green jobs.

BIOGRAPHIES

ANNEX

C

Høgni Karsten Hoydal, Deputy Prime Minister of the Faroe Islands and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Høgni Karsten Hoydal (born 28 March 1966), commonly called Høgni Hoydal, is a Faroese politician. He currently serves as Deputy Prime Minister of the Faroe Islands and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He has been the party leader of Tjóðveldi since 1998.

Before taking office, Høgni Hoydal was a reporter of the Faroese national television station, Kringvarp Føroya, for some years prior to his election to the Faroese parliament in 1998.

[REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], Head of the Representation of the Faroe Islands to the United Kingdom

[REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information]

[REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], adviser at the Foreign Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade

[REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information]

[REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], secretary and political adviser at the Representation of the Faroe Islands in London

[REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information]

FAROE ISLANDS COUNTRY PROFILE

ANNEX D

Full name: Faroe Islands (autonomous territory of the Kingdom of Denmark)

Population: 53,358 (as of June 2021) **Capital:** Tórshavn

Head of State: Queen Margrethe II of Denmark

Head of Government: Aksel V. Johannesen (**Social Democratic Party, since December 2022**)

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade: Høgni Hoydal

Government composition: A coalition government consisting of the Social Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the Progressive Party.

Political developments:

- Early parliamentary elections in the Faroe Islands took place on 8 December 2022, the opposition party – Social Democratic Javnaðarflokkurin received the largest share of votes (27%) and secured nine seats in a 33-seat Parliament. The leader of the winning party, Aksel V. Johannesen became the Prime Minister and formed a three-party coalition.
- [REDACTED - Section 30(b)(i) - Free and frank provision of advice]
- The Faroe Islands are politically associated with the Kingdom of Denmark but have been self-governing since 1948. In October 2007, the Faroe Islands became one electoral district.

Hot topics:

- [REDACTED - Section 32(1)(a)(i) - Relations with other states]
- [REDACTED - Section 32(1)(a)(i) - Relations with other states]
- [REDACTED - Section 32(1)(a)(i) - Relations with other states]
- In 2023, the Faroese Parliament **unanimously agreed to adopt the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity**. It recognises the Faroes government's commitment to cultural policy and creative arts and preservation of culture in all its forms.

Recent engagement:

- September 2023 – Ms McKelvie met with the Faroese Presidium and the Head of the Faroese Representation to the UK, [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information].
- August 2023 – Ms Gougeon met with Minister for Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade, Mr. Høgni Hoydal in the margins of Aquanor in Norway.
- October 2022 - Meeting between Mr Robertson and Jenis av Rana, Faroese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Culture at the Arctic Circle Assembly
- July 2022 - Ms Gougeon met virtually with the Faroese Minister for Fisheries Árni Skaale.
- June 2022 – Mr Robertson met with [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], Head of Faroese Representation to the UK.
- September 2021 – Scotland House London meeting with the Faroese Foreign Affairs Committee.

Document 2.0 - Engagement report from meeting with Høgni Hoydal

MEETING WITH THE FAROESE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER	
Minister	Angus Robertson (AR) , Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
Type of engagement	Bilateral meeting
Date	26 April 2024
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Høgni Hoydal (HH), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade • [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], Head of the Representation of the Faroe Islands to the UK • [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], Adviser at the Foreign Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade • [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], Secretary and Political Adviser at the Representation of the Faroe Islands to the UK
Key points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HH asked AR about SG's priorities in external affairs. AR explained SG's policy to remain aligned with EU policy where possible, and talked about Scotland's presence in Brussels through SHB, He added that a key focus was our near northern neighbourhood (N.B. he earlier talked about the realignment of Scotland's view of its place in the world, with an increased focus towards our northern neighbours). • AR said that a key area of focus is on European energy security, and talked of the potential for Scotland to be a major exporter of green hydrogen, and of the importance of Scotland and its near neighbours working together to develop the hydrogen market. HH said he would be interested in how our governments could work together on hydrogen using the Arctic Circle

Assembly to secure a coherent approach. AR added that it would be useful to link up energy officials to discuss this further.

- HH explained that the Faroes are yet to undertake a process of spatial planning for their oceans, but would be beginning such a process soon. **Tidal** energy has been the main focus for the Faroes thus far, and is becoming feasible. AR pointed out that Orkney is home to the largest tidal energy demonstrator in Europe, and that it would be useful to put Scottish and Faroese companies and developers in touch to ensure we learn from one another. HH agreed that Faroese companies would be eager to work with their Scottish counterparts and that they have a lot to learn from Scotland on **offshore wind** especially.
- HH talked about the Faroe Islands' engagements with UKG on **trade**. In particular he pointed to Faroese investment in Scottish **aquaculture** and the difficulty Faroese companies are facing in exporting feed to Scotland. AR said that SG is working to ensure that reserved UK trade policy reflects Scotland's needs, and that we are grateful for the Faroese government keeping us informed so that we can seek to influence accordingly.
- On **flights** between Scotland and the Faroes, AR suggested it would be helpful to promote the direct links between Torshavn and Edinburgh, securing Scotland as a hub for wider connections between the Faroes and Europe.
- [REDACTED - Section 30(b)(ii) - Free and frank exchange of views]
- [REDACTED - Section 32(1)(a)(i) - Relations with other states]
- [REDACTED - Section 29(1)(a) - Development of Scottish Government policy]
- AR talked about promoting **cultural links** between Scotland and the

	<p>Faroes. He stated that he was eager for the UK media to give voice to more of the stories from places such as the Faroe Islands. In screen, AR pointed to the huge potential to promote co-productions in our regions. Both countries work closely with Iceland, and HH agreed that a regional approach to this would be positive. He added that they had invited Brand Scotland to visit the Faroes, and looked forward to learning from their approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HH asked about the best ways to formalise engagement between Scotland and the Faroes, and outlined his government's agreements with Japan, the US and the EU. He suggested energy and culture would be good areas of focus. AR said he was eager to see our governments working together to deliver outcomes. • HH welcomed AR to visit the Faroes, and said his government would help pull together a programme to focus on the shared issues raised today.
Attending official	<p>[REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], France and Germany, European Relations [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], Multilateral Policy Adviser, International Futures</p>
Comment	<p>An engaging meeting that focused on shared priorities between northern neighbours. Despite being small by population, the geostrategic importance of the Faroes cannot be underestimated, and we should ensure we work to promote our shared bonds in terms of youth mobility, trade and culture. The Foreign Minister made it clear that the issues the Scottish Government faces, be it in energy security or the effects of Brexit, are often shared by our island neighbours to the north.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED - Section 29(1)(a) - Development of Scottish Government policy]

Document 3.0 - Briefing pack for meeting with Falko Mohrs

Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture – Angus Robertson

Briefing for meeting with Lower Saxony Minister for Science & Culture

What	Meeting with Lower Saxony Minister for Science & Culture Falko Mohrs
Where	Conference room 4ER, St Andrew’s House
When	Wednesday 1 May, 09.30-10.15
Key Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany is an important and valued partner for Scotland both for academic mobility and research and innovation cooperation. We welcome your reflections on possibilities to continue to strengthen and expand our connections with Germany, including through Horizon Europe. • Our priority is to become more active internationally, fostering global connections by promoting educational and research exchange to raise the profile of Scotland as a place to live, work and study. • Scotland’s natural resources, skilled offshore workforce, excellent port structure and strong innovation hub, make Scotland one of the best places in the world to develop offshore wind and its supply chain. ScotWind is the world’s largest commercial round for floating offshore wind and puts Scotland at the forefront of offshore wind development globally. • Scotland’s extensive renewable resources-, experienced workforce and highly specialised technical companies, mean we can play an important role in the hydrogen revolution and large-scale green hydrogen production. Lower Saxony is a key state for our hydrogen engagement, and is part of the Hy5 alliance of northern German states. • Life sciences is a key growth sector of the Scottish economy. Scotland has a global reputation as an innovative leader in fields such as drug discovery and advanced manufacturing.
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falko Mohrs (SPD) –Minister for Science and Culture • Delegation of 26 members, including representatives of academic institutions and 3 Lower Saxony MdLs • Christiane Hullmann – German Consul General
Why	An opportunity to build on strong relations with Lower Saxony across higher education, research and innovation and renewables. The delegation is very keen to explore ways to further support academic collaboration between Scotland and Lower Saxony.

Supporting official	[REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], European Relations [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information] [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information], Higher Education [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information]
Briefing contents	Annex A: Summary Annex B: Attendees Annex C: International Research Annex D: International Education Annex E: EU Youth Mobility Annex F: Lower Saxony core brief
Social Media	<i>Suggested tweet [REDACTED - Section 30(c) - Prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs]</i>

ANNEX A

SUMMARY

Minister Mohrs will be travelling with a delegation of 25, including 18 academics representing a number of Lower Saxony universities and research institutes and three MPs from the Lower Saxony Landtag. Officials have agreed the following broad areas for discussion with the delegation:

- 2) **General discussion on Scottish and UK politics**
- 2) **Scotland and the EU; Erasmus and youth mobility; youth exchange**

As part of their wider four-day visit programme, the delegation will have meetings with Universities Scotland and the RSE and will visit Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling and Strathclyde universities. [REDACTED - Section 29(1)(a) - Development of Scottish Government policy]

- [REDACTED - Section 29(1)(a) - Development of Scottish Government policy]
- [REDACTED - Section 29(1)(a) - Development of Scottish Government policy]
- [REDACTED - Section 29(1)(a) - Development of Scottish Government policy]

The delegation is eager to enable Scottish HEIs to partner with Lower Saxony HEIs to access European funding programmes and university networks. They are particularly keen to gauge the appetite for cooperation around their **Zukunft-Niedersachsen fund** (ca. 1.75bn). [REDACTED - Section 29(1)(a) - Development of Scottish Government policy].

[REDACTED – Section 29(1)(a) - Development of Scottish Government Policy].

[REDACTED – Section 32(1)(a)(i) - Relations with other states]. Cab Sec could therefore *emphasise the value of the cooperation between the Länder, as expressed*

by the MoU between Universities Scotland and the Lower Saxony Universities Conference, and on the other partnerships/MoUs within the sector.

Sensitivities

[REDACTED - Section 30(b)(i) - Free and frank provision of advice]

[REDACTED - Section 30(b)(i) - Free and frank provision of advice]

[REDACTED - Section 30(b)(i) - Free and frank provision of advice]

Hydrogen

- Currently Germany is looking to Norway, North Africa and the Middle East in terms of potential importers of green hydrogen. The signing of the UK/Germany Hydrogen Partnership in Berlin in September 2023 provides the opportunity for us to work with Germany to secure Scotland's role as a major supplier of renewable hydrogen based on geographical proximity, shared values, experience in energy production and the stability of potential supply.
- We do not want Scotland's position outside the EU to act as a barrier to Scotland realising its full potential as part of the locus of hydrogen production and infrastructure emerging around the North Sea. We would like to see direct pipelines between Scotland and Europe considered as part of the hydrogen supply corridors explored by the European Hydrogen Backbone Initiative.
- Lower Saxony is a key partner in hydrogen, with the Port of Wilhelmshaven due to be a key import location. SG European Hydrogen Envoy [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information] will be attending the Port of Wilhelmshaven Hydrogen event in Berlin in May, alongside Economy Minister Olaf Lies. Ms Martin will also share an online platform with Olaf Lies in a session focusing on hydrogen as part of the British-German Association's events series.

ANNEX B

ATTENDEES

Falko Mohrs has been the Lower Saxony Minister for Science and Culture since November 2022 following elections and a change of government in Lower Saxony. He previously served as an SPD MP for the state of Lower Saxony from 2017 – 2022. He is involved in the Board of Trustees of several cultural foundations, including the Braunschweig Foundation, Lower Saxony State Theatre Hannover and the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation.

Consul General Christiane Hullmann

They will be accompanied by:

- **Silke Lesemann (SPD) – MdL**
- **Cindy Lutz (CDU) – MdL**
- **Pippa Schneider (Greens) – MdL**
- Stephan Barth – Managing Director, ForWind
- Andreas Bertram – President, Hochschule Osnabrück
- Bernhard Brümmer – Vice-President, University of Göttingen
- James Conroy – Academic Director, ECAS
- Volker Epping – President, Leibniz University Hannover
- Daniel Göske – Göttingen Academy of Sciences & Humanities
- Inge Hanewinkel – Vice-President, University of Göttingen
- Dörte Heüveldop – Vice-President, Hochschule Hannover
- Angela Ittel – President, Technical University Braunschweig
- Christoph Kleinberg – Managing Director, ECAS
- Sebastian Lehnoff – Chair, OFFIS Institute for IT
- Michael Manns – President, Hannover Medical School
- Verena Pietzner – President, University of Vechta
- Thomas Schulz – Head of Institute of Virology, Hannover Medical School
- Georg Schütte – Secretary-General, Volkswagen Foundation
- Gunter Seckmeyer – Institute of Meteorology & Climate, Leibniz University Hannover
- Jörg Philipp Terhechte – Vice-President, Leuphana University
- Christina von Haaren – Vice-President, Leibniz University Hannover
- [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information] – Government of Lower Saxony
- [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information] – Government of Lower Saxony
- [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information] – Government of Lower Saxony
- [REDACTED - Section 38(1)(a) - Personal Information] – Government of Lower Saxony

ANNEX C

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

- Scotland is a recognised world-leading research nation that drives transformation and innovation to solve global problems, such as climate change, food poverty and gender equality.
- The UN's Sustainable Development Goals underpins our National Performance Framework, in the past 10 years, almost one third of Scotland's research was directly related to our National Performance Framework. (SFC Report 2022).
- The Scottish research sector is highly collaborative – initiatives like Innovation Centres, Research Pools and Interface create a critical mass of excellence and allow us to harness our research capabilities. The smaller size and shape of the sector means collaboration at a national level can be achieved with a “Team Scotland” approach.
- Scotland's strengths resonate with Horizon Europe five missions and six clusters; across health, climate change, digital and agriculture.
- We welcome the UK's association to the EU programmes, and look to maximise our opportunities to work with our European partners on global challenges in areas of mutual interest.
- Horizon Europe is globally unparalleled and Scotland has benefited greatly from the scope, scale and prestige of this €95.5bn European Research & Innovation Framework programme.
- We are keen to work closely with our European partners and welcome your reflections on possibilities to continue to strengthen and expand our connections with Germany. Germany is an important and valued partner for Scotland both for academic mobility and research and innovation cooperation.
- Scotland will always welcome European Researchers to our nation – recognising their value to our research base. [Note: 2022-23, 19% of academic staff at Scottish universities were from the EU. (HESA)]
- Through numerous strategic partnerships via European Networks and the Horizon Programme, Germany is Scotland's leading partner for research cooperation in Europe and second partner globally, behind only the USA - this research brings the most impact to Scotland (Scottish Science Advisory Council Report 2019).
- Scottish stakeholders have recently built vital relationships with key German funding bodies, the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to create further opportunities for bilateral links with Germany in areas of mutual research interest.

ANNEX D

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

- In 2021/22, Germany was the second top EU sending country with 1,925 students from Germany studying in Scottish HE institutions.

- Scotland welcomes international students and recognises the important and valuable contribution they make to the Scottish economy, our educational environment and Scottish society.
- International students add to the diversity of our communities, enrich the learning experience, and support local businesses and jobs.
- Scottish Government's priority is to become more active internationally, fostering good global connections by promoting educational and research exchange to raise the profile of Scotland as a place to live, work and study.

Scottish Education Exchange Programme

- The Scottish Government is committed to addressing one of the most damaging consequences of Brexit for our universities and colleges – the fact that UK students can no longer take part in the Erasmus+ Programme.
- The UK Government replacement – the Turing Scheme – is much less effective. It helps fewer students, it does not help staff at all, and it does not enable overseas students to come to Scotland.
- We are working with the UK Government and stakeholders on the shortfalls of the Turing Scheme and ways to address those.
- In 2023-24, the Scottish Government have funded a test and learn project to re-establish some of the opportunities Erasmus+ provided, which the Turing Scheme does not.
- The test and learn project is being developed with partners and demonstrates the value we continue to place on enabling young people and staff to study and live abroad.
- The test and learn project won't be able deliver the full benefits of the Erasmus programme – it's currently much smaller in scale – but will support student and staff exchanges and help develop stronger partnerships between educational institutions.
- We will use the learning from the 2023-24 pilot to develop the exchange programme going forward.
- We will prioritise placements for disadvantaged groups and further demonstrate our commitment to EU and global partnerships with schools, colleges, and universities.

Scotland's International Education Strategy (Launched 7 Feb 2024)

- Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland have been engaged in the development of the strategy and their feedback has been incorporated into the document.
- The IES is focused on three key themes: attracting and diversifying the international student population; maximising the economic benefits of international higher education; and promoting Scotland's as a work leader in research and knowledge exchange.

EU YOUTH MOBILITY

- On 18 April, the EU Commission proposed to the EU Council that it open negotiations with UKG on a youth mobility treaty.
- The proposal is limited to 18-30 year olds and a length of stay of four years, with no route to permanent settlement.
- The proposal goes significantly beyond other UK youth mobility schemes including no quota, the right to bring dependants, access to home status for university tuition fees, and waiving the immigration health surcharge.
- The Home Office responded that the UK Government was not looking to negotiate a Youth Mobility agreement with the EU, and its focus remains on securing Youth Mobility agreements with individual countries, like the ones it has with Australia, India and others.

Top lines

- We welcome this announcement by the European Commission. The ending of free movement has had a detrimental impact on Scotland's young people. Any steps to remedy this are welcome.
- It is disappointing to see the UKG's response to this proposal, and disappointing also to see that Labour has not responded more positively.
- SG has long advocated that better opportunities should be created for young people to enjoy the opportunities offered by mobility, including study and education, work experience and creative and social initiatives.
- We urge the UKG to respond positively to the Commission's initiative and to constructively negotiate a deep and generous agreement with the EU.
- We also urge UKG and the EU to enter negotiations on gaining access for UK students and other young people to the Erasmus+ Programme to maximise the benefits of such a deal.

LOWER SAXONY CORE BRIEF

Population: 8.15m (2023)

Area: 47,614.07 km² (2nd largest)

Capital: Hannover (pop. 534,000)

GDP (2021): €339,414bn (4th highest, after NRW, Bavaria & BW)

GDP per capita (2022): €39,401 (9th highest out of 16)

Unemployment (2022): 5.4% (7th lowest out of 16)

Minister-President: Stephan Weil (SPD, since February 2013)

Governing Parties: SPD and Green

Next election: Autumn 2027

Major Cities: Hannover, Braunschweig (Brunswick), Oldenburg, Wolfsburg, Osnabrück

Politics

Lower Saxony is often viewed as an SPD stronghold, having been run by SPD Minister-Presidents for 49 out of 77 years since the founding of Lower Saxony was approved by British occupying authorities in 1946. Prominent figures from Lower Saxony include former chancellor Gerhard Schröder, former Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel and former German President Christian Wulff. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen spent her early years in Brussels before moving to Hannover. Lower Saxony was one of the origins of the German environmentalist movement, in reaction to the state government's support for underground nuclear waste disposal. This led to the formation of the German Green Party in 1980.

Following the most recent state election in October 2022, Lower Saxony is governed by a “red-green” coalition between the SPD and Greens, led by Minister-President Stephan Weil (SPD).

Weil first became Minister-President in 2013 after a narrow election victory over previous Minister-President David McAllister (CDU), who has deep links with Scotland, and presided over a “grand coalition” between the SPD and CDU between 2017-2022.

Lower Saxony's leading politicians at federal level are Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD), Labour and Social Affairs Minister Hubertus Heil (SPD), Foreign Affairs Minister Annalena Baerbock (Greens), Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (SPD), SPD party co-leader Lars Klingbeil, and Christian Dürr, leader of the FDP parliamentary group in the Bundestag.

Historically Lower Saxony has strong ties to the UK, dating back to the Hanoverian accession, when the thrones of the United Kingdom and Hannover were in personal union under a series of monarchs from George I until William IV.

Economy and Innovation

Economically, Lower Saxony exhibits significant contrasts between rural and coastal areas in the north, which have struggled to keep pace economically, and the more prosperous south, which includes Hannover and the manufacturing hub of Wolfsburg. Coastal areas have mainly suffered since the decline and closure of

many shipyards, and agriculture in Lower Saxony is similarly split between the north, where lower soil quality means livestock is the focus, and the south, which focuses on crops, particularly potatoes and asparagus.

Wolfsburg is home to Europe's biggest carmaker Volkswagen. VW is the state's largest employer and an extremely important driver of the local economy. The state government takes an active role in its management - it has a 20% stake in VW and Minister-President Weil has a seat on the supervisory board. The wider Volkswagen Group, which owns the Audi, Bentley, Lamborghini, Porsche, SEAT and Skoda brands among others, is also headquartered in Wolfsburg. Hannover is also home to tyre giant Continental and travel firm TUI.

Science and Culture

Lower Saxony is a German state (Land) in northwestern Germany. It is the second largest state by land area, with 47,614 km², and fourth-largest in population (8 million) among the 16 Länder federated as the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Ministry of Science and Culture is located in Lower Saxony's capital Hanover overseeing an annual budget of around €4 bn (2024). In Lower Saxony, there are 20 universities under state responsibility, including seven universities of applied science. There are also a variety of non-university research institutions under state responsibility and six Max Planck Institutes, four Fraunhofer Institutes, three locations of the Helmholtz Association as well as five locations of the German Aerospace Centre within the Helmholtz Association and seven institutions of the Leibniz Association located in Lower Saxony.

The main research areas in Lower Saxony include energy (electrical distribution networks and renewable energies), mobility, aerospace engineering, microtechnology, nano and quantum engineering, gravitational physics, life sciences (translation research, genomic analysis, infection research, cognitive and neurosciences, molecular biosciences, biomedical engineering and implant research as well as hearing technology), nutritional sciences and climate and marine research.

Document 4.0 - Engagement report from meeting with Falko Mohrs

ENGAGEMENT REPORT	
Minister	Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture (AR)
Type of engagement	Meeting
Date	1 May 2024
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falko Mohrs (FM), Lower Saxony Minister for Science & Culture Christiane Hullmann, German Consul General Wider delegation of Lower Saxony university representatives
Key points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AR welcomed the delegation to Scotland and spoke of the successes of the Scottish Higher Education sector. Noting SG's pro-European outlook, he commended the UKG rejoining Horizon Europe, but added that Scotland will continue to press for reaccession to Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. AR provided a brief update on the strength of Scotland's universities, noting world-leading research in life sciences, AI and data. Scotland's door was always open to counterparts in Lower Saxony for collaboration on projects of mutual interest. [REDACTED – Section 32(1)(a)(i) - Relations with other states] On the impact of Brexit on academia, AR noted that Scotland wants to ensure that academic links remain strong and encourage the next generation of student exchanges with Germany. SG was committed to supporting our university and college sectors to operate at the international level. AR updated on Scotland's efforts on the energy transition and renewables, noting SG had recently licensed a first round of floating offshore wind totalling 27GW. AR said that a key area of focus is on energy security. He talked of the potential for Scotland to be a major exporter of green hydrogen, and of the

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