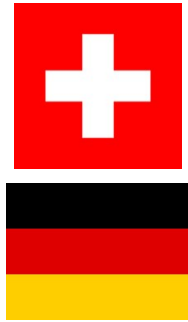


ANGUS ROBERTSON, CABINET SECRETARY
FOR CONSTITUTION, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
AND CULTURE



VISIT TO SWITZERLAND AND
GERMANY

26 – 29 November 2025

CABINET SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTION, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND
CULTURE, VISIT TO SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY 26-28 NOVEMBER 2025

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ITINERARY

Time	Activity	Notes
Wednesday 26th November 2025		
06.00-11.10	Flight, Edinburgh to Geneva (via Paris)	AirFrance 1842
12.25-14.26	Train, Geneva Airport-Bern Hbf	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] to pick up delegation at GVA airport.
14:26-14:45	Travel from Bern Hbf to British Ambassador's Residence	Embassy car
14:45-15:00	Arrival at the Residence	Brunnadernrain 11, 3006 Bern
15:00-15:05	Travel to British Embassy Bern	Embassy car to Thunstrasse 50, 3005 Bern
15:05-15:30	Briefing with UK Ambassador to Switzerland James Squire	British Embassy Bern
15.30-16.00	Briefing with SDI	British Embassy Bern
16.00-17.30	Trade & Investment roundtable with SDI and selected VIP investors	British Embassy Bern
17:30-17:45	Travel to Ambassador's Residence	Travel by foot - Brunnadernrain 11, 3006 Bern
18.00-21.00	Guest of honour at British Embassy St Andrew's Day reception, including delivering speech	Ambassador's Residence Cab Sec to deliver speech at approx. 18:05 Cab Sec to remote vote in suite from 18:35-18:50

Thursday 27th November 2025		
08:30-09:30	Breakfast briefing at Residence	Brunnadernrain 11, 3006 Bern
09:30-10:00	Travel to Federal Palace, East Wing	Embassy car
10:00-10.45	Meeting with Patric Franzen, Deputy State Secretary at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs	Bundeshaus, Bundesplatz 3, 3005 Bern
10:45-11:00	Travel to Innosuisse	Embassy car

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		Cab Sec to remote vote from approx. 11:00-11:30 at Innosuisse
11.30-12.30	Meeting with Innosuisse	Einsteinstrasse 2, 3003 Bern
12.30-13.00	Travel to Federal Palace	Federal Palace, Bundesplatz 3, 3005 Bern
13.00-14.30	Working lunch with National Council Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Laurent Wehrli	Parliament Building (North Entrance), Bundesplatz 3, 3005 Bern
14.30-14:55	Travel to Bern Hbf	Embassy car
15.02-16.12	Train travel to Zurich Airport	Cab Sec available to vote remotely from 15:15-20:00 Secure wi-fi connection in first class Gabriel (SDI) to accompany delegation to Zurich airport.
16.15-20:00	Cab Sec to vote remotely	VIP airport lounge (after security)
21.05-22.40	Flight, Zürich to Berlin	Easyjet EJU5188
23:00-23:30	Travel to hotel and check-in	Steigenberger Airport Hotel Berlin, Willy-Brandt-Platz 3, 12529 Schönefeld

Friday 28th November 2025		
09.00-09.20	Breakfast briefing with officials	At hotel
09.20-10.20	Travel to Bundestag	Embassy car (Mercedes minibus 0-49-3). NB no return to hotel planned until after St Andrew's Day event.
10.20-10.30	Register and transfer to venue	Arrival at Paul-Löbe-Haus, Eingang West, 10.20
10.30-11.30	Meeting with Germany-UK Parliamentary Friendship Group – Jakob-Kaiser-Haus	
11.35-12.30 (travel times vary from 40-60 mins depending on traffic)	Travel to Potsdam	Embassy car (pick up from Paul-Löbe-Haus, Eingang Süd)
12.30-13.20	Lunch	Trattoria Zille, Karl-Liebnecht Straße 19, 14482 Potsdam

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13.20-13.30	Travel to Studio Babelsberg	Embassy car
13.30-14.50	Meeting with Studio Babelsberg Vorstand and Mayor of Potsdam, and site tour	Studio Babelsberg AG, Haus 62, August-Bebel-Straße 26-53, 14482 Potsdam
14.50-16.00	Travel to Flying Steps Academy Kreuzberg, Lobeckstraße 30-35	Embassy car
16.00-16.45	Tour of Flying Steps Academy, accompanied by Aurora Nova Director Wolfgang Hoffmann	
16.45-17.00	Travel to British Embassy	Embassy car
17.15-17.40	Free time/box time; change for St Andrew's Day reception	
17.40-17.50	Travel to Baden-Württemberg Landesvertretung, Tiergartenstraße 15, 10785 Berlin	Embassy car
18.00-18.15	Pre-meet with Baden-Württemberg co-host StS Rudi Hoogvliet, Bevollmächtigter des Landes Baden-Württemberg	
18.15-22.00	Attendance at Berlin St Andrew's Day reception, with speech and performance by Firelight Trio	Guests arriving from 18.00, event begins at 18.30, speeches 18.30-19.00 (Cab Sec CEAC giving keynote), Firelight Trio performance 20.00-20.30 (after which Cab Sec would be free to leave)
Late	Taxi to hotel	Steigenberger Airport Hotel Berlin, Willy-Brandt-Platz 3, 12529 Schönefeld

Saturday 29th November 2025


06.00-09.20	Flight, Berlin to Edinburgh via Amsterdam	BER-AMS KL1770 AMS-EDI KL923
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SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY: CONTACTS

SUPPORTING OFFICIALS / CONTACTS		
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] SG	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	Private Office	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] SDI Dusseldorf	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] SDI Dusseldorf	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
Catherine Reeves	Head of Germany Hub	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] Germany Hub	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] SG Germany Hub	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] SDI Bern	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] SDI Bern	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	Bern Embassy drivers	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	Berlin Embassy driver	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
HOTELS		
British Embassy Berne Residence, Brunnadernrain 11, 3006 Berne		N/A
Steigenberger Airport Hotel Berlin , Willy- Brandt-Platz 3, 12529 Schönefeld		+49 302 464 970
TRANSPORT		
Bern taxi firms		Taxi Bern: +41 313 121 212 Betax: +41 800 903 090
Zürich taxi firms		Swiss Taxi Zurich: +41 76 318 2525 City Taxi Zurich: +41 76 250 3131
Berlin taxi firms (Ubers are also readily available)		Taxi Berlin: 030-20 20 20 TaxiFunk Berlin: 030-44 33 22
STAKEHOLDERS		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Tel</i>
Andreas Gut	Innosuisse Deputy Head of Knowledge Exchange/International Collaboration	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] Foreign Affairs Committees of the Swiss Federal Assembly	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	UK-Germany Parliamentary Friendship Group	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
Wolfgang Hoffmann	Aurora Nova	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] Babelsberg Film Studio AG	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	Potsdam Mayoral Office	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] BW LV	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]

ENGAGEMENTS BRIEFING

1. BRIEFING WITH UK AMBASSADOR TO SWITZERLAND, JAMES SQUIRE

What	Briefing with UK Ambassador to Switzerland James Squire	
Where	British Embassy, Thunstrasse 50, 3005 Bern	
When	Wednesday 26 November, 15.05-15.30	
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasise the dual focus of the visit: celebrating cultural ties and advancing practical Scottish-Swiss cooperation on trade, investment and shared policy priorities e.g. innovation with key stakeholders. • Express appreciation for the Ambassador and Embassy's kind support in facilitating the visit. • Looking forward to participating in the investor roundtable and St Andrew's celebrations alongside the Ambassador. • Keen to hear about how UKG is promoting Scottish interests in Switzerland. • Shared Scottish policy priorities with Switzerland include fintech, life sciences, innovation, energy and space. • My colleague Kaukab Stewart, Minister for Equalities, plans to visit Geneva 14-17 December to participate in the Global Refugee Forum and showcase Scotland's strategic approach to refugee integration. 	
Who	<p>James Squire – UK Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein since January 2023. Since joining the FCDO in 2008, he has worked in a number of foreign policy and corporate roles in the FCDO including Head of North East Asia and Pacific Department (2019-2022) and Head of DPRK Department (2018-2019). He previously served as Deputy Ambassador to Afghanistan (2018) and worked four years at the UK Mission to the UN in New York. He has a background in finance, working as a financial analyst before joining FCDO.</p>	
Why	Introductory briefing with UK Ambassador to welcome you to Switzerland, brief you on the political context and plans for the Embassy St Andrew's reception, and discuss how UKG is promoting Scottish interests in country.	
Supporting officials	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]	
Media handling	See separate Comms plan	
Social media	See separate Comms plan	

2. TRADE AND INVESTMENT ROUNDTABLE WITH SDI AND SELECTED VIP INVESTORS

What	SDI-led roundtable discussion with key Swiss investors in Scotland
Where	British Embassy Bern, Thunstrasse 50, 3005 Bern
When	Wednesday 26 November, 16:00 – 17:30
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today's session will offer you a unique opportunity to gain insights into the UK's current economic policy landscape, learn how Scotland supports international businesses, share your experiences and growth ambitions in Scotland. • Thank Swiss investors for their continuing and further investment in Scotland. • Appreciate their participation in the roundtable discussion, where we welcome open and frank discussions. • We are supporting existing investors to develop, grow and expand in Scotland.
Who	<p>SGS - Malcolm Reid, Head SGS Europe Ferring - Alan Harris, Snr VP R&D Management Linxon - Jean-Francois Vallée, CFO Roche Diagnostics - Jorg Spielmann, Head of Diagnostics Syngenta - <<Still awaiting confirmation as to who from the company will be attending, SDI to confirm in Switzerland..>> Julius Baer - Frank Wulms, Managing Director UK Marussia Beverages – Fadoua Dürr, Group Head of HR/Communications</p>
Why	<p>Opportunity to showcase Scotland's Economic Policy Landscape Provide Swiss investors with up-to-date insights into the Scotland's economic policy directions and priorities.</p> <p>Platform to strengthen relationships with existing investors Knowledge exchange and growth ambitions Offer a platform for investors to share their experiences and ambitions for growth in Scotland, and to discuss opportunities and challenges.</p> <p>Support investor growth and expansion Reinforce the commitment to supporting existing investors to develop, grow, and expand their operations in Scotland.</p>
Supporting officials	<p>[redacted - s38(1)(b)] – SDI international inward investment Team Leader [redacted - s38(1)(b)] – SDI international inward investment Specialist</p>
Additional Information	German speakers in attendance: Jörg Spielmann from Roche Diagnostics and Frank Wulms from Julius Baer.
Briefing contents	<p>Annex A: Event programme Annex B: Points for discussion Annex C: Company Backgrounds and Biographies Annex D: Policy line Annex E: Speaking note (separate attachment)</p>
Media handling	See separate Comms plan
Social media	See separate Comms plan

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ANNEX A – EVENT PROGRAMME

- 16:00** Guests arrive / seated
- 16:05** Greetings & Scene setting – Johannes Augustin (SDI)
- 16:10** Welcome by the British Ambassador (Economic Policy Agenda UK) – Ambassador James Squire
- 16:15** **Welcome by the Cabinet Secretary (Economic Policy Agenda Scotland) – Angus Robertson**
- 16:20** How SDI & DBT provide company support
- DBT, [redacted - s38(1)(b)]
 - SDI, [redacted - s38(1)(b)]
- 16:35** Dial-in of the Bayes Centre (AI Innovation Centre) – [redacted - s38(1)(b)]
- 16:40** Short introduction of participants and open discussion with Angus Robertson – [redacted - s38(1)(b)] to facilitate
- 17:20** Wrap up – next steps
- 17:30** End

ANNEX B – Points for discussion

1. “What plan or initiatives does the Scottish Government have to boost Biotech innovation and private - public Biotech collaborations in Scotland and how do these rank in terms of policy priorities?”

Ferring (life sciences company) posed the above - we have two life sciences companies at the Roundtable for whom this question is of relevance).

SDI Response:

Support for companies with R&D projects, training support and co-investment options in start-up life sciences companies.

We recently co-invested in

- Rhizocore Technologies, fungal biotech to boost tree survival, 4.5 mio GBP secured, SE co-invested /
- 1haler, inhalable drug delivery, £1.5 million in seed funding /
- Scottish Brain Sciences, CRO Alzheimer Clinical Research Centre – GBP 2.5 mio contribution

2. “In terms of any questions for the Cabinet Secretary I am sure he will cover most topics, one area of interest would be around support for industry to upskill or invest in current employees to enhance their career opportunities, as the Cabinet Secretary will be aware there is a UK levy on payroll which can be applied to training in England but a little unclear if this can be applied in Scotland for companies to develop their employees on site or at external educational institutions.”

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

SDI Response:

Scotland gets a proportional amount of the UK levy on payroll and this money is administered by [Skills Development Scotland](#), who can work with companies e.g. on apprenticeship schemes and bespoke trainings for companies. We at SDI / Scottish Enterprise have **Workforce Innovation specialists** and can introduce companies to them.

3. “What are the Scottish government plans to ensure that the financial services sector can continue to attract and retain the best talent in Scotland given the Income tax rate differential with the rest of the UK and the challenges that brings. “

Julius Baer (financial services) requested an update on the above.

Response:

- The Scottish Government is aware that financial services firms have raised concerns about the higher level of income tax for top earners in Scotland.
- The Scottish Government regularly engages with the sector through our Financial Services Growth and Development Board, which brings together

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business leaders and Ministers to discuss matters ranging from skills and retention, to capital investment, to challenges facing the economy as a whole.

The Scottish Government and SDI are working closely with Fintech Scotland, a cluster with over 240 fintech companies and Scottish Financial Enterprise to grow the sector that already encompasses 2000 businesses (largest cluster in the UK, outside London).

- The Scottish Government is supportive of the ambitions of Scottish Financial Enterprise's Skills Action Plan for the sector and the building of green financial services skills in Scotland through the implementation of Taskforce for Green and Sustainable Financial Services recommendations.

Scotland is investing in Financial Services talent. There are 9900 students currently studying finance and accounting, and over 101,000 students studying related fields like business and management, computing, engineering and technology, law, and mathematical sciences.

- In their first annual "Accelerating Growth in Scotland's Financial Services Sector", EY noted that 41% of surveyed financial services leaders in Scotland felt that strong strategic partnerships between Government, business and academia was an advantage to doing business in Scotland.
- In the Investment Associations Investment Management Survey 2025, it was noted that Scotland is a growing hub for IT, tech, AI and innovation roles, accounting for 20% of all Scottish investment management related roles.

Scotland's cost of living and cost of doing business are both substantially lower than in other major financial hubs such as London, meaning that people have more disposable income.

- 36% of EY respondents [to their Accelerating Growth Survey] noted the cost of living and doing business as a major advantage for Scotland, and a further 33% noted affordable housing in major urban centres as an advantage.

Syngenta – GM Crops

Issue

- SG opposes the cultivation of Genetically Modified (GM) crops in Scotland. SG remains aligned with the current EU regulations in not recognising a legal distinction between GM and Gene Edited (GE) organisms.
- UKG has introduced Precision Breeding (PB) legislation for England, which reduces regulation for gene editing (GE) technologies in comparison to the regulation of Genetic Modified (GM) organisms.
- GMO policy is a devolved competency – however, while in theory the PB legislation applies to England only, the Internal Market Act means that GE food products marketable in England can also be sold across the UK.

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- While the EU legislation currently in force does not recognise a distinction between GE and GM, officials expect proposed legislation reducing regulation for GE technologies (which the EU terms New Genomic Techniques – NGTs) to be agreed over the coming months.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

Top lines

- Currently our position is clear – we are opposed to the cultivation of GM crops in Scotland. We are aware of the current debate around new genomic techniques and how these relate to existing genetic modification legislation.
- The Scottish Government is committed to supporting our agriculture sector in sustainable food production, while also meeting our nature and climate targets. Whilst no decisions on gene editing have been taken at this stage, we will ensure that any changes made to our policies are in the national interest.
- Ministers will take into account stakeholder views, alongside developments in the EU, as they consider any next steps.

Background

- In 2023, in UKG passed the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act, which differentiated gene editing (GE) technologies from genetic modification (GM).
- At the same time the EU published proposals on a different, but similar set of regulations.
- The EU position has been paused whilst EU institutions reached a negotiating position but this is now moving on and EU legislation is expected to pass at the end of 2025 or early 2026. The secondary legislation to allow the marketing of PB plants and food products for England came into effect this month. [redacted - 30(b)(i)]

Annex C: Company backgrounds and biographies

Linxon

Background: Linxon is an Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC) company, a joint venture between Hitachi & Atkins Realis, headquartered in Switzerland, providing electrification and substation project management expertise.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

Jean-Francois Vallée, CFO

Jean-Francois heads the Accounting, Project Controls, Treasury and IT functions. He has a degree in Accounting from Laval University in Canada, and is a Canadian Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA). He previously worked for SNC Lavalin and held different roles within Corporate Finance and with the Hydro, Transmission and Distribution business units.



Julius Baer (Financial Services sector)

Background: A Swiss multinational private banking and financial services firm headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. Specialising in wealth management, investment advisory services, real estate financing, and selective trading services, it is one of the world's largest dedicated private banks, managing CHF 497.4 billion in assets as of 2024.

UK / Scottish operations: Opened an office in Edinburgh in 2018 and another in Glasgow in 2024, offering a range of services, including investment advisory, wealth planning advisory, and client relationship management. The decision to open the second office aligns with JBI's commitment to deepening its presence in Scotland and strengthening relationships with local clients.

Scotland has a 200-year legacy in asset management, with Edinburgh recognised as the largest asset management centre in the UK outside London, managing over £500 billion in assets. Scottish Financial Enterprise (SFE) has launched a strategy to double assets under management to £1 trillion by 2030, positioning Scotland as a globally competitive asset management hub.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

Frank Wulms – Managing Director, Senior Advisor

- Frank Wulms is Managing Director and Senior Advisor for Public Policy & Stakeholder Management at Julius Baer.
- With over 25 years in financial services, Frank specialises in regulatory, policy, and geopolitical developments.
- Previously held senior roles at UBS and the Government of Liechtenstein, and is an INSEAD EMBA graduate.
- Frank is recognized for his strategic advisory and cross-cultural leadership across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.



Roche Diagnostics

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Background: Roche Diagnostics is a division of Roche Holdings, headquartered in Basel, Switzerland. It is a global leader in diagnostics and personalised healthcare, with a strong presence in molecular diagnostics, oncology, virology, microbiology, and blood screening. Roche Diagnostics is recognised for its innovative diagnostic tests and commitment to advancing precision medicine.

Global Footprint: Operates in over 100 countries. Employs more than 100,000 people worldwide, with over 2,000 staff in the UK.

UK / Scottish operations: Roche reached an agreement to acquire LumiraDx's point-of-care testing technology in December 2023, with a significant presence in Scotland through this acquisition. The company manufactures and commercializes an innovative diagnostic Platform that supports a broad menu of tests with lab comparable performance at the point of care. It has on the market and in development 30+ tests covering infectious diseases, including Covid-19 testing, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and coagulation disorders, operating two sites in Scotland, one R&D hub & one manufacturing facility.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

Jörg Spielmann – Head of Diagnostics Operations

- Jörg Spielmann is Head of Diagnostics Operations at Roche, based in Basel, Switzerland. With more than 15 years of experience in operations management, business development, and M&A in diagnostics and healthcare, Jörg has held leadership roles at Roche Diagnostics International and Prionics AG.



SGS S.A Group

Background: Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, SGS S.A. is the world's largest inspection, verification, testing and certification business, employing almost 100,000 staff across 2,600 offices and laboratories around the world. Servicing most industrial sectors, including life sciences, the core services can be divided into 3 categories: Testing; Inspection; and Certification. In addition to these, the Group also provides Training and Consultancy services. To year end 2024, Group revenue was £6.3bn.

UK / Scottish Operations: Within the UK, SGS is the leading provider of independent inspection, certification, testing verification and training services, employing over 1,500 people across some 50 facilities. The UK head office is at Ellesmere Port (SGS UK Ltd)

In 2012, SGS acquired Vitrology Ltd as a unique addition to the Group's capabilities. The company, originally founded in 2007, operates from Clydebank. [redacted - 30(b)(i)] it provides a range of bio-safety services such as virology, cell and molecular biology as well as microbiology and electron microscopy. In Scotland, SGS Group also has laboratory/office facilities in Dyce and Grangemouth.

- SGS Vitrology Ltd is based in Clydebank, Scotland, [redacted - 30(b)(i)]
-

Malcolm Reid – Head of Europe, SGS

- Malcolm Reid is Head of Europe and Executive Committee Member at SGS, the world's leading inspection, verification, testing, and certification company.
- With over 35 years at SGS, Malcolm has held senior leadership roles across Asia-Pacific, Australia, and Europe, including Chief Operating Officer for South East Asia & Pacific, and Executive Vice President for Consumer Testing Services and Systems & Services Certification.
- Malcolm is recognised for his expertise in business planning, risk management, and international operations, and is a board member of several industry associations.
- Malcolm is Scottish with a BSc in Chemistry from Glasgow University.



Ferring Pharmaceuticals

Background: Ferring Pharmaceuticals is a global leader in reproductive medicine and maternal health, headquartered in Switzerland. The company is known for its innovative hormone treatments used in IVF. Ferring's products are distributed in over 60 countries, with a strong commitment to meeting unmet societal health needs.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

Alan Harris – Senior Vice President, R&D, Ferring Pharmaceuticals

- Dr. Alan Stephen Harris is Senior Vice President for Research & Development at Ferring Pharmaceuticals, where he has led global R&D initiatives since 1984.
- Alan's responsibilities include global life cycle management, early-stage licensing, and partnerships. He also chairs Amzell BV and Bazell Pharma AG, and serves on several biotech boards. Alan holds a PhD in Biopharmaceutics from Uppsala University and an MBA from Ashridge Business School.



Marussia Beverages

Background: An international producer and distributor of wines, sakes, and spirits. Operates in 12 countries with 14 distribution companies and 12 production sites, employing around 1,165 people. It has a turnover of €294 million and is owned by the Swedish Paulsen family, with its headquarters in Switzerland. Marussia Beverages is known for its premium brands and innovative products in the beverage industry.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

Fadoua Dürr, Group Head of HR/Communications

She is a Human Resources specialist with extensive experience in labour relations and as a headhunter.

Syngenta Group

Background: Syngenta is a Swiss HQ'd chemical company specialising in the provision of agricultural products, primarily seeds, herbicides, and pesticides. The

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business was founded in 2000 following the merger of Novartis and AstraZeneca, it was acquired by ChemChina in 2017.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

DFM visited Syngenta in Grangemouth earlier this year to welcome **SE grant funding of £2.2 million** towards a project to expand the site's production capability and capacity, including the establishment of a new Seedcare manufacturing facility. The project will **create 38 and safeguard 14 permanent full-time jobs**.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

Attendee tbc – SDI to brief Mr Robertson in Switzerland

ANNEX D – Policy Lines

FINTECH

- The combination of a strong, mature financial services sector – including several major technology development centres for global Financial Services companies - and vibrant globally recognised FinTech cluster is what gives Scotland its edge.
- The level of support in Scotland is second to none. New companies receive help, guidance and funding from Scottish Enterprise and many other organisations.
- Entrepreneurs and companies wanting to relocate to Scotland or expand internationally can benefit from the services provided by Scottish Development International.
- The Scottish Government is committed, working with our partners, to ensure we have the best possible operating and policy environment in place for Fintech businesses to succeed.
- We will work with partners and industry to encourage digital adoption in all of our businesses, sectors, and institutions – ensuring they understand the opportunities and how to seize them.
- Through its innovative and collaborative model, FinTech Scotland has led Scotland to be recognised as the UK's first fintech cluster centre of excellence by the European Economic Cluster accreditation body.
- Starting with **26** fintech firms in 2018, there are now over **240+**.
- Scotland's fintech cluster has a strong governance model which brought together entrepreneurial firms, large FS institutions, global tech companies, public sector bodies, academia and regulators – a total of 28 strategic partners.

Background

FinTech is a story of Scottish success. Starting a few years ago with 26 fintech firms, today the ecosystem has increased by tenfold to more than 250, with more in the pipeline. Scotland's cluster approach, supported by FinTech Scotland, has delivered key innovations, including:

- The Financial Regulation Innovation Lab; an industry-led collaborative research and innovation programme focused on leveraging new technologies to help evolve the future regulatory landscape for financial services;
- The establishment of the world's first Smart Data Foundry at Edinburgh University; which supports innovation in data sharing. The Foundry works in partnership with the Financial Data and Technology Association (FDATA) and draws on expertise from academia, financial services and fintech businesses.
- A strong convening role which brings key sector players together, including through flagship events like the FinTech Festival, attended by world-leading experts, investors and companies looking to grow in Scotland, and the Scottish FinTech awards, which celebrates success across the sector.
- Access to genuine expertise, networks, and communications support that gives entrepreneurs and fledgling FinTechs access to what they need, when – by doing this, we hope to support FinTechs at every stage of their journey, but especially to help them to scale up from SMEs to larger enterprises.

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In addition, the Scottish Government is committed, working with our partners, to ensure we have the best possible policy environment in place for Fintech businesses to succeed, and has worked closely with FinTech Scotland to develop an approach that delivers growth and meets the needs of the sector.

To do this, we will work with partners and industry to encourage digital adoption in all of our businesses, sectors, and institutions – ensuring they understand the opportunities and how to seize them. Our ambition is to stimulate a larger, more diverse pipeline of start-ups, create an inclusive support system and reach a 'tipping point' where ecosystem growth becomes self-sustaining.

The Scottish Government has made a commitment in its Programme for Government 2025-26 to engage with global hubs to strengthen the Scottish FinTech and Financial Services sector, and to leverage our partnership with the City of London Corporation to generate opportunities. This has been underpinned by dedicated resource, within Scottish Enterprise, to work in-market to capitalise on these opportunities, and sector-facing events, such as the “Driving Responsible Innovation” events held at Scotland House London, to convene the sector and help deliver growth.

FinTech in Switzerland

Switzerland’s fintech sector in 2025 remains a global leader. Despite a slowdown in funding and deal activity following a peak in 2022, the ecosystem, comprising over 500 companies, continues to evolve through technologies like blockchain, AI, and sustainable finance. The country’s strong banking tradition, clear legal frameworks, and business-friendly environment, especially in hubs like Zug’s “Crypto Valley,” have attracted major players in digital assets and crypto finance. Most Swiss fintech’s favour B2B models and target institutional clients, with expansion focused on EMEA and Asia due to favourable regulatory conditions.

Switzerland–Scotland Fintech Links

- In 2025, a Scottish fintech trade mission to Zurich showcased seven innovative Scottish firms to Swiss financial institutions, hosted by SIX Group and supported by UK and Scottish trade bodies. This event highlighted Scotland’s international mindset and its ambition to collaborate with European fintech hubs like Switzerland.
- The FinTech Scotland Festival regularly features Swiss participants and speakers, reinforcing bilateral engagement in areas like open finance and sustainable innovation

Innovation

- In Scotland, innovation is an intrinsic part of our culture, our society and our economy - it’s how we tackle climate change, improve public health, and create high-quality jobs.
- Our goal is clear: to position Scotland as one of the most innovative small nations in the world. And with the talent, creativity, and ambition we have - there’s no reason we can’t lead the way.
- We remain firmly committed to backing Scotland’s researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs, and are taking decisive action.

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- This includes:
 - Unlocking opportunities for high value clusters with £5 million provided to support Scotland's high growth industries.
 - Investing almost £3 million through a Proof of Concept Fund to support researchers to develop their innovative ideas and technologies and bridge the gap between groundbreaking research and commercial applications.
 - Establishing a Deep Tech Super Cluster to support companies on their journey to manufacturing at scale.
 - Establishing the Scottish Technology Council to provide expert insight into the opportunities and the challenges facing our tech sector.
 - Launching our AI Scotland programme, including a pilot scheme for SMEs that positions Scotland as a creator and supplier of AI technologies.

Background

Scotland's National Innovation Strategy

- Scotland's National Innovation Strategy sets out an ambitious plan to increase innovation levels across Scotland.
- Published in 2023, the strategy sets out actions aimed at utilising innovation as a driver to grow the economy and create jobs in areas of strength.
- Focus areas include:
 - Energy transition
 - Health and life sciences
 - Advanced manufacturing
 - Data and digital technologies
- Since publishing Scotland's National Innovation Strategy, we have been working closely with key partners to develop and deliver its four programmes.
 - **New market clusters**, working collaboratively across the broader public sector, academia and industry we are establishing a Cluster Development programme to build world leading excellence in those priority areas where Scotland has the educational, industrial and natural assets necessary to be truly world class.
 - **Entrepreneurship / commercialisation**, maximising the economic impact of university spin-outs and further commercialising academic research;
 - **Innovation Funding** - reviewing funding and support by the public sector in Scotland.
 - A **Productivity Programme** will support more of our SMEs to innovate and increase productivity through connection with our innovation architecture.
- Together these programmes aim to embed an investor mindset across innovation support in Scotland and move to a more strategic and targeted approach to investing in the areas which have been identified as our priorities.

Life Sciences

- Life Sciences is an innovative, high-growth sector identified as an economic priority area by the Scottish Government through publication of the **National Strategy for Economic Transformation (2022)** and **Scotland's National Innovation Strategy (2023)**.

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- The economic and health benefits Life Sciences can deliver for Scotland has been recognised by the Scottish Government through publication of:
 - **Life Sciences Export Plan (2022)**
 - **Inward Investment Plan (2022)**
 - **Digital Health and Care Strategy (2021)**
- The UK Innovation Survey 2021 reported 80.8% of Scottish Life Sciences businesses were innovation active in the previous three years – compared to a rate of 39.0% more generally across the Scottish business base.
- Scotland has excellent public research institutions producing world leading Life Sciences research and development (R&D). Over the next 10 years, the **National Innovation Strategy** aims to harness innovative research within Scotland and create a bold entrepreneurial ecosystem centred around universities as engine for growth, supporting a pipeline of scalable university spin-outs.
- Implementing Scotland's **National Innovation Strategy** will put Scottish universities R&D at the heart of the economy, leveraging public sector funding to its maximum value, and capitalising on cross sectoral collaboration.
- The largest sub-sectoral contributors to total Gross Value Add (GVA) in Scottish Life Sciences are Medtech and Pharma Services & Contract Research, with high growth sub-sectors including Pharmaceuticals, Digital Health, Agritech and Therapeutics.

The UK and Switzerland are also key global players in life sciences – with the UK's life sciences sector worth £108 billion, and Switzerland home to major companies like Roche and Novartis. Both countries are building on their positions of strength in life sciences, with the £8 million joint funding call to support UK-Swiss clinical trials, that could deliver new treatments and diagnoses for a range of diseases that are currently affecting patients across both countries. The work is overseen by the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), the research delivery arm of the Department of Health and Social Care, and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

Economic Growth

- Boosting economic growth is a top priority for this government - it is key to both raising living standards in Scotland and funding the public services that we all rely on.
- Our economy continues to be one of the best performing parts of the UK and since 2007, GDP per person in Scotland has grown by 10.3%, compared to 6.8% in the UK and productivity has grown at an average rate of 0.9% per year compared to the UK average of 0.3%.
- Our Economic Strategy sets the overarching vision for Scotland's economy, and the 2025 Programme for Government set out some of the short-term priority actions we are taking over the remainder of this parliament to drive economic growth in Scotland.
- Our National Strategy for Economic Transformation latest report shows that just three years in 44% of original actions now complete including:
 - Over 82,500 connections delivered through the Reaching 100% (R100) broadband programme.
 - Leveraged up to £670mn in private investment for offshore wind supply chain and ports, backed by £150mn public sector investment.

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- Scotland's Green Freeports are attracting early-stage investment. Sumitomo's £350m and Haventus' £300m commitments are being followed by further investments from Forth Ports (£50m in Leith) and Mitsui at the Port of Nigg.
- Our Enterprise Agencies have supported over 16,100 jobs and helped unlock £1.37bn in planned capital investment.
- Fair Work conditionality applied to over £3.42bn of public sector grants (between April 2024 and March 2025).

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3. BRITISH EMBASSY ST ANDREW'S DAY RECEPTION

What	British Embassy St Andrew's Day reception
Where	British Embassy Residence, Brunnadernrain 11, 3006 Bern
When	Wednesday 26 November, 18.00-21.00
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delighted to return to Bern to celebrate St Andrew's Day, reaffirm Scotland's rich cultural connections with Switzerland and highlight the enduring friendship between our peoples. Switzerland is a key European partner with whom Scotland shares many policy priorities, from innovation and life sciences to space, energy and FinTech.
Who	Hosted by Ambassador James Squire, approx. 55 guests are expected to attend.
Why	A good opportunity to engage with key Swiss stakeholders from industry, business and politics, as well as Switzerland-based GlobalScots.
Supporting officials	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
Briefing contents	<p>Annex A: Programme</p> <p>Annex B: Biographies of dinner companions and other VIP guests, with suggested speaking points</p> <p>Annex C: Full guest list (separate attachment)</p> <p>Annex D: Speech (separate attachment)</p>
Media handling	See separate Comms plan
Social media	See separate Comms plan

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ANNEX A: PROGRAMME FOR ST ANDREW'S DAY, SWITZERLAND

17:30-18:00	Guests arrive
18:00	Welcome Speech, HMA
18:05	Welcome Speech, Angus Robertson
18:10	Musical performance (bagpipes)
18:25	SDI remarks
18:30 - 20:00	Networking Reception
18:35-18:50	Cab Sec to vote remotely

ANNEX B: BIOGRAPHIES OF DINNER COMPANIONS AND OTHER VIP GUESTS; WITH SUGGESTED SPEAKING POINTS

Iain Martin, Chair & Executive Coach for Global Business Leaders | Founder, I.J. Martin & Co Ltd



- Iain Martin is an accomplished executive coach and strategic advisor with extensive experience guiding global business leaders toward transformative growth and leadership excellence.
- As Chair, Iain plays a pivotal role in fostering international business connections and promoting Scotland's global economic influence. -
- Trusted advisor to CEOs and senior leadership teams across diverse sectors, helping organizations navigate complex challenges and achieve sustainable success.
- GlobalScot member since 2012 and Chair of the GlobalScot Swiss Regional Advisory Board.

Potential point to raise:

1. GlobalScots activities in Switzerland

Maureen Deehan - CEO, Vivtex

- Maureen Deehan is a dynamic business leader and innovator, serving as CEO of Vivtex, a company at the forefront of advanced technology solutions.
- With a strong track record in driving growth and fostering innovation, Maureen combines strategic vision with operational excellence to deliver transformative results for global clients.
- As a GlobalScot member since 2018, Maureen champions Scotland's international business presence and actively supports initiatives that connect Scottish enterprises to global opportunities.



Potential point to raise:

1. Strength of Pharma industry in Switzerland and how Scotland positions itself.

Maida Kranjc - British-Swiss Chamber of Commerce (BSCC) Business Leader & Connector



- Maida Kranjc is a successful business leader and advocate for cross-border collaboration, serving in a key role within the British-Swiss Chamber of Commerce (BSCC).
- Dedicated to strengthening economic ties between the UK and Switzerland, fostering strategic partnerships, and supporting businesses in navigating international markets.
- BSCC – Driving initiatives that promote bilateral trade and investment between the UK and Switzerland.
- Experienced in building networks that connect senior executives, policymakers, and industry leaders to create opportunities for growth and innovation.
- Recognised for her ability to facilitate dialogue and collaboration across diverse sectors.

Potential point to raise:

1. Scottish involvement within BSCC.

**Leti McManus- BSCC Zurich
British-Swiss Chamber of Commerce**

- Leti McManus is a business leader and connector, actively engaged in strengthening bilateral trade and professional networks between the UK and Switzerland.
- Through her role at the British-Swiss Chamber of Commerce (BSCC) in Zurich, Leti fosters collaboration, drives strategic initiatives, and supports members in navigating international business landscapes.
- Spearheads programmes and events that promote cross-border business opportunities and knowledge exchange.
- Advocate for international trade and economic cooperation, with a focus on creating value-driven networks.



Potential point to raise:

1. Scottish involvement within BSCC.

**Peter Müller-McDougall - Swiss Honorary Consul in Edinburgh
EDA (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland)**

- Peter Müller McDougall serves as the Swiss Honorary Consul in Edinburgh, representing Switzerland's diplomatic interests and fostering strong bilateral relations between Switzerland and Scotland.
- With a distinguished background in international affairs and business, Peter plays a key role in promoting cultural exchange, trade, and collaboration across sectors.
- Extensive experience in international diplomacy and cross-border business engagement.
- Active contributor to initiatives that enhance Swiss-Scottish cooperation in trade, education, and cultural exchange.




Potential point to raise:

1. Discussing ways to further promote collaboration across sectors—such as joint business ventures, academic partnerships, or cultural programme.

4. BILATERAL MEETING WITH FDFA STAATSEKRETÄR PATRIC FRANZEN

What	Bilateral meeting with Swiss FDFA Deputy State Secretary Patric Franzen
Where	Bundeshaus, Bundesplatz 3, Bern CH-3005
When	Thursday 27 November, 10.00-10.45
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delighted to be in Bern to celebrate St Andrew’s Day and explore opportunities to strengthen our cooperation with Switzerland. Looking forward to continuing to strengthen our partnership across many areas, especially around trade, life sciences, innovation, fintech, renewable energy and space. • The Scottish Government is keen to see trade increase with Switzerland in a way that is consistent with our principles in Scotland’s Vision for Trade. Any new trade agreement must serve the best interests of Scotland: our economy, people and planet. • We welcomed the recent announcement of the extension of the UK-Switzerland Services Mobility Agreement (SMA) and support efforts to secure permanent business mobility arrangements through the ongoing negotiations on an enhanced UK-Switzerland SMA. • We are also keen that existing levels of market access granted through the UK-Switzerland trade continuity agreement are maintained and that opportunities are explored to improve access to Swiss markets for Scottish producers. • Energy security is a key shared priority. Scotland has the resources, people and ambition to become a world leader in the production of reliable, competitive, sustainable hydrogen. • Keen to hear more about Switzerland’s approach to carbon capture and storage (we understand that Swiss industrial regions north of the Alps may wish to transport captured emissions north via Germany for storage). Scottish North Sea waters have capacity to store 53 billion tonnes of compressed carbon. • On space, acknowledge Switzerland’s strong reputation for precision engineering and innovation in space technologies alongside their space sustainability achievements, including their leading Space debris removal programme – ClearSpace. Note the shared values of sustainability and complimentary technological excellence between Switzerland and Scotland. • Offer up the details of the chairs of the ETF to explore collaborative opportunities. Offer the details of Space Scotland to explore collaborations with the Scottish space sector, connect to our innovation research landscape, and connect with supply chain opportunities. • Interested to hear about Franzen’s experience as the Swiss Lead EU Negotiator. • Given the current international situation and the resulting global insecurity, cooperation with the rest of Europe and the European Union is more important now than ever. • I welcome the recent Switzerland-EU agreements on programmes and the forthcoming package due before the end of the year, as these open more opportunities for collaboration with Scotland (esp. Horizon). • Ask how the Swiss Government expects cantons to be involved in the next steps of the EU association agreement process (e.g. referendum) and whether they expect any difficulties in getting the budget for Erasmus (for 2027) approved.

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Who	<p>Patric Franzen is Deputy State Secretary at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, with a distinguished diplomatic career spanning over two decades. He currently leads Switzerland’s Europe Division, playing a central role in shaping Swiss-EU relations. He is responsible for Switzerland’s engagement with the EU, including negotiations on institutional frameworks and bilateral agreements. His leadership has been pivotal in Switzerland’s evolving relationship with the EU, especially in the context of institutional negotiations and regional cooperation. He is a Swiss German speaker, with working proficiency in English and French.</p>	
Why	<p>An opportunity to encourage deeper engagement with the Swiss Government, representing our first engagement with a Swiss Minister in recent years, to showcase Scotland’s strengths, and to explore opportunities for collaboration around shared policy priorities, including EU engagement.</p>	
Supporting officials	<p>Ambassador James Squire [redacted - s38(1)(b)]</p>	
Briefing contents	<p>Annex A: Background briefing</p>	
Media handling	<p>See separate Comms plan</p>	
Social media	<p>See separate Comms plan</p>	

ANNEX A: Background briefing

SPACE

Scottish space sector strengths

- Scotland is leading in small satellite manufacturing, with Glasgow producing more small satellites than any other place in Europe.
- We have expertise in data gathering and analysis. Scotland is the data-driven capital of Europe, hosting the largest centre for informatics in the UK and over 170 data science companies.
- Our world-class universities, particularly in Edinburgh, are deeply engaged in cutting-edge research, including AI and space data applications.
- Edinburgh will also be home to the UK's new national supercomputer, which will significantly bolster Scotland's data and AI capabilities, supporting innovation across space and adjacent sectors.
- Launch will be the final piece of Scotland's end-to-end supply chain capability.
- Scotland are thought leaders in space sustainability.
- In 2022, with the support of the Environmental Task Force (ETF), Scotland launched the world's first ever Sustainable Space Roadmap to encourage responsible growth and set us on the path to becoming the greenest space sector in the world.

LINES ON US TARIFFS

- Trade is crucial to economic growth and resilience - we believe in free and open trade and international business activity.
- The US tariff increases on the UK is a concern for Scottish exporters, particularly those who are most reliant on the US market for their goods sales.
- The Scottish Government strongly supports efforts to reduce tariffs and finalise the remaining elements of the UK-US trade deal, to provide long-term certainty and stability to our transatlantic trading partnership.
- As well as calling for a reduction in the 10% reciprocal tariff, the Scottish Government has been pressing the UK Government to ensure a permanent resolution to the long-running trade dispute over aircraft subsidies, which led to a 25% tariff on single malt Scotch whisky and other iconic Scottish exports such as cashmere and cheese.
- There are a range of well-established sources of support available to exporters in Scotland. These include updated advice on US tariffs and the movement of goods to the US through the Department for Business & Trade's website, to existing channels of support for exporters through the Scottish Enterprise website.
- In addition, as per our PFG announcement, we will provide additional investment to intensify our efforts on export growth, to meet emerging opportunities and challenges through the 6 Point Export Plan.

UK- SWITZERLAND FREE TRADE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

Lines to take

- This Scottish Government is keen to see trade increase with Switzerland in a way that is consistent with our principles in Scotland's Vision for Trade. Any new trade agreement must serve the best interests of Scotland: our economy, people and planet.
- We welcomed the recent announcement of the extension of the UK-Switzerland Services Mobility Agreement (SMA) and support efforts to secure permanent business mobility arrangements through the ongoing negotiations on an enhanced UK-Switzerland SMA.
- We are also keen that existing levels of market access granted through the UK-Switzerland trade continuity agreement are maintained and that opportunities are explored to improve access to Swiss markets for Scottish producers.

BACKGROUND

The UK and Switzerland currently trade on the terms of a continuity agreement following UK exit from the EU. Following a year of exploratory talks, the UK and Switzerland formally announced their intention to pursue an enhanced Free Trade Agreement on 15 May 2023. The Scottish Government has been consistently engaged with the UK Government through negotiations ensuring Scottish interests and priorities are understood.

UK Switzerland Services Mobility Agreement:

- As part of ongoing FTA negotiations, the UK Government has been pursuing a permanent extension to the existing SMA, which was due to expire 31 December 2025. The SMA allows UK professionals to travel freely to Switzerland and to work and deliver services visa-free for up to 90 days per year. The agreement ensures UK professionals will not face economic interest tests or be required to secure work permits during these first 90 days of service supply. The SMA also allows Swiss professionals to come to the UK and provide services under contract in a number of key skilled sectors through the UK's service supplier visa for up to 12 months. UK Government analysis has indicated that the SMA benefits the UK far more than Switzerland.
- The UK Government pursued a temporary extension of the SMA because waiting for the enhanced UK-Switzerland FTA to be completed would allow the existing SMA to lapse, due the length of time that it generally takes to negotiate and implement such agreements. This temporary extension has been successful and the expiry of the extended agreement will be 31st December 2029. The UK Government will continue to negotiate for a longer-term business mobility solution as part of the enhanced FTA.

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Scotland-Switzerland Trade:

In 2023, both goods exports and imports between Scotland and Switzerland totalled £200 million and Switzerland ranks as number 5 in Scotland's 'A Trading Nation', making it a priority market with immediate opportunities across a range of sectors.

EU RELATIONS – TOP LINE BRIEFING AT 17 NOV 25

Main Lines

- **Given the current international situation and the resulting global insecurity, cooperation with the rest of Europe and the European Union is more important now than ever.**
- **The founding values of the EU are the values of the Scottish nation** – human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and respect for human rights.
- **Scottish Government ministers have welcome the rebuilding of relations** with the EU and are particularly concerned that devolved and Scottish interests are given full regard in the negotiations process.
- Working closely with the EU and Europe will also allow us to **strengthen relationships with countries globally to address shared challenges such as climate change and political instability** that can only be tackled through international action.
- **Scottish Government is committed to engaging constructively with our EU partners** e.g. First Minister met with Commission President von der Leyen while the latter was in Scotland over summer, and reassured her how strongly the Scottish Government sees the current negotiating process as a way to repair some of the damage of Brexit.
- The current **UK-EU negotiations have significant effect across reserved as well as devolved policy**. Scottish Government ministers take a very active interest in the negotiations process given the extent to which Scottish Government interests are involved across the negotiation areas.
- **We have been very clear on what we seek from our relations with the rest of Europe and the EU, and published this month (10 Nov) a wide-ranging position paper** (here: [Scottish Government priorities for UK-EU negotiations: position paper - gov.scot](#)) that sets out our objectives both for the negotiations process and for Scotland's relationship with the EU. This builds on seven policy papers where we set out our objectives for the UK-EU summit in May.
- **There are many areas in which a closer partnership with the EU has potential to deliver mutual benefit** for the people of Scotland and the whole UK, as well as the people of Europe
- **Scottish Government is ready to work with the UK and the EU towards stability and progress, and we have key areas of devolved competence**, for example in energy, life sciences, and commerce, on which we will contribute our skills, reputation and networks in order to help rebuild relations

Scottish Government Objectives

Scottish Government has highlighted eight areas as priorities for progress in the current UK-EU negotiations

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- **Seeking an EU-UK veterinary or SPS Agreement** to support trading of food, drink, and agricultural products with the EU.
- **Participating as fully as possible in relevant EU Programmes** such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe.
- **Achieving closer energy and climate cooperation** including more efficient EU-UK electricity trading arrangements, and access to EU hydrogen fora and initiatives.
- **Securing opportunities for youth mobility through a youth mobility visa agreement.**
- **Removing unnecessary Brexit red tape and barriers to trade** including a mutual recognition agreement on conformity assessment and consistent application of border processes to facilitate trade.
- **An agreement on fisheries access which protects Scottish interests and protects the marine environment**
- **Closer law enforcement and judicial cooperation** to keep people across Scotland as well as Europe safe.
- **Closer defence and security cooperation** to support a strong united Europe

Scottish Government has been clear on our priorities for relations with the EU: as well as the recently-published wide-ranging policy paper Scottish Government also published seven position papers published in the run-up to and at the time of the UK-EU summit in May, on specific priorities for UK-EU cooperation. These are:

- [Agrifood trading arrangements with the EU](#)
- [Closer energy and climate cooperation with the EU](#)
- [Erasmus+ reassociation](#)
- [Creative Europe reassociation](#)
- [Youth mobility agreement with the EU](#)
- [Law enforcement and criminal justice cooperation with the EU](#)
- [Addressing barriers to trade with the EU](#)

Background

- At a joint summit on 19 May 25, the UK and EU agreed to cooperate more closely on a range of policy areas as part of a new strategic partnership.
- Subsequently a series of nine negotiating tables¹ has been configured between the UK and EU and a series of mandates agreed by the UK and the EU.
- Scottish Government ministers have welcomed the intent signalled and called for the closest series of agreements to be negotiated. They have also highlighted the importance of devolved interests being represented in the process and outcome of the negotiations.
- There will be substantial legislative and implementation work for Scottish Government to realise the outcomes of the negotiations as the negotiations cover multiple policy areas, many either entirely within devolved competence, or sitting across devolved-reserved boundaries.
- We expect there to be a further UK-EU Summit with ambition to announce tangible progress in the negotiations at the time; prior to that the G20 Summit on

¹ These are on: SAFE defence fund; Youth experience; Erasmus+; Wider security; SPS agreement; ETS linking; Electricity trading; Law enforcement and judicial cooperation; Irregular migration



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22-23 November is being seen as a key point for signalling early progress in several of the negotiating tables.

The previous Trade and Cooperation Agreement will continue in force throughout negotiations; we expect a meeting of the Partnership Council in December.

[redacted – s28(1)]

5. MEETING WITH INNOSUISSE, SWISS AGENCY FOR PROMOTION OF INNOVATION

<p>What</p>	<p>Meeting with Innosuisse</p> <p>Innosuisse is Switzerland's federal innovation agency, mandated to promote science-based innovation in the interests of the economy and society. It funds collaborative projects between companies and research institutions, supports start-ups, and drives flagship initiatives in areas such as digitalisation, sustainability, and quantum technologies. The meeting offers an opportunity to strengthen Scotland-Switzerland ties in innovation, explore joint R&D projects, and align with Innosuisse's strategic priorities for 2025-2028.</p>
<p>Where</p>	<p>Innosuisse, Einsteinstrasse 2, CH-3003 Bern</p>
<p>When</p>	<p>Thursday 27 November, 11.30-12.30</p>
<p>Key messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scotland is committed to fostering international innovation partnerships to drive economic growth and tackle global challenges. • Switzerland is a leading innovation nation; strong synergies exist in life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and digital technologies. • Scottish Government supports collaboration between academia and industry, aligning with Innosuisse's mission to bridge research and market applications. • Scotland's Life Sciences cluster is currently one of the largest life science clusters by employment in Europe, creating high value jobs and contributing to Scotland's economic, health and wellbeing priorities. • Scotland's distinctive capabilities bolster its global reputation as an innovative leader in fields such as drug discovery and advanced manufacturing. • Ask about how Scotland and Switzerland could work together more through Horizon Europe, ensuring that we are fully using this mechanism to advance key interests and technologies.
<p>Who</p>	<p>Andreas Gut, Head International Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Head of the Innosuisse Division for Knowledge Transfer & International Collaborations. • Chairperson and National Project Coordinator for Switzerland in the Eureka Initiative, including Eurostars. • Leads the development of strategy and project initiatives for Switzerland and Innosuisse in the domain of international innovation cooperation.  <p>Prabitha Urwyler, Programme Manager - Bilateral Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 20 years of experience across software development, biomedical engineering, clinical research, and innovation diplomacy. • Combines academic expertise with entrepreneurial and strategic leadership to foster global partnerships and inclusive innovation. • Significant work in nanotechnology, biosensors, biomaterials, implant surfaces, neuroscience, psychiatry, and gerontechnology. • Former Deputy Group Leader at the Gerontechnology and Rehabilitation Group, ARTORG Center, University of Bern. 

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-founder of two active ventures in the biomedical and innovation space.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position Scotland as a strong partner in life sciences, AI, quantum technologies, and sustainability. • Following the Innosuisse MoU with Innovate UK signed in 2022, obtain an update on collaborations with Scotland, next bilateral programmes where Scotland could be involved specifically. • Gain an update from Innosuisse re current projects and priorities – with a particular focus on Scotland, to help identify areas of alignment and key opportunities for collaboration. • Explore bilateral innovation projects between Scotland and Switzerland. • Discuss opportunities for Scottish SMEs and start-ups to access Innosuisse programmes.
Supporting officials	[redacted - s38(1)(b)]
Briefing contents	<p>Annex A: Opportunities for Scotland Annex B: Background on Innosuisse Annex C: Innovation briefing</p>
Media handling	See separate Comms plan
Social media	See separate Comms plan

ANNEX A: Opportunities for Scotland

- Access to Innosuisse funding programmes for collaborative innovation projects.
- Joint R&D projects in life sciences, AI, quantum technologies, and sustainability.
- Networking opportunities for Scottish SMEs and start-ups with Swiss counterparts.
- Position Scotland as a gateway for UK-EU innovation partnerships, leveraging Swiss expertise.
- Potential for knowledge exchange and best practices in scaling innovation ecosystems.

Scotland's Offerings – Key Supporting Facts:

Scotland's Innovation Strengths

- **World-Class Research & Talent:** Scotland is home to three of the world's top 100 universities, with a high rate of university spinouts and a vibrant angel investor community. The country consistently ranks among the UK's best for turning research into businesses, especially in life sciences, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and digital technologies.
- **Collaborative Ecosystem:** Powerful partnerships exist between academia, industry, and government, facilitating innovation clusters and advanced research hubs. Scotland's Innovation Centres and Centres of Excellence support transformative solutions to global challenges.
- **Funding & Support:** Through Scottish Enterprise and other agencies, businesses can access grants, investor funding, and tailored support for R&D, talent development, and international expansion.

Sustainability & Net Zero Leadership

- **Renewable Energy:** Scotland generated the equivalent of 113% of its electricity consumption from renewables in 2022, with offshore wind supplying 40 GW—enough to power 40 million homes. The Scottish Government is committed to being a Net Zero Nation by 2045, pioneering the Just Transition to ensure economic and social benefits for communities.
- **Innovative Companies:** Firms like Sunamp (thermal energy storage) and MiAlgae (zero-waste livestock feed from whisky by-products) are leading sustainable innovation, winning international awards and transforming industries.
- **Circular Economy & Green Tech:** Scotland is advancing policy and commercial partnerships in net zero, circular economy, and green technologies, with significant opportunities for joint R&D and knowledge exchange.

Quantum Technologies

- **Global Opportunity:** Scotland's quantum sector is poised to become a billion-pound industry by 2030, leveraging strengths in photonics, advanced optics, and adjacent markets like healthcare, space, and financial services.
- **Research Hubs:** Two of the UK's five quantum research hubs are in Scotland (Glasgow and Edinburgh), driving breakthroughs in secure communications, navigation, and quantum-enabled technologies. The sector benefits from strong government and private investment, with ambitions for a £10bn turnover by 2035.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Scotland's universities and SMEs are collaborating on quantum computing, sensors, and imaging, supported by national and international funding.

International Collaboration & Innosuisse Partnership

- **Bilateral Innovation Projects:** Scotland and Switzerland (via Innosuisse) have a track record of joint projects in life sciences, AI, quantum technologies, and

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sustainability. Scottish SMEs and start-ups can access Innosuisse programmes for collaborative R&D, networking, and market entry.

- **Flagship Initiatives:** Innosuisse’s strategic priorities for 2025–2028 align with Scotland’s strengths—systemic innovation, digitalisation, sustainability, and quantum research. Recent UK-Swiss initiatives have funded projects in life sciences, AI, and green energy.

Additional Key Facts

- **Business Support:** Scotland offers a unique “Team Scotland” approach, providing ongoing business support, property searches, feasibility studies, and aftercare for investors and partners.
- **Talent Attraction:** TalentScotland promotes job opportunities internationally, supports companies in attracting and retaining skilled professionals, and provides practical information for relocating and setting up in Scotland.
- **Economic Impact:** Scotland’s innovation-driven sectors create high-value jobs, support regional growth, and foster a dynamic, inclusive business environment.

Potential Areas for Discussion:

- MoU update – Specific aspects for Scotland
- Discuss future bilateral calls and how Scottish organisations can be better integrated
- Following on the MoU signed in 2022, update on collaborations with Scotland, next bilateral programmes where Scotland could be involved specifically
- Gain an update from Innosuisse re current projects and priorities.
- Explore bilateral innovation projects between Scotland and Switzerland.
- Discuss opportunities for Scottish SMEs and start-ups to access Innosuisse programmes.
- Position Scotland as a strong partner in life sciences, AI, quantum technologies, and sustainability.

ANNEX B: Background on Innosuisse

Innosuisse is Switzerland's Innovation Agency. It operates under a federal mandate with an annual budget of approximately CHF 200 million. Strategic priorities for 2025-2028 include promoting systemic innovation, supporting flagship projects in digitalisation and sustainability, and advancing quantum research. Innosuisse collaborates internationally through bilateral agreements and programmes such as Eurostars and Eureka. Recent UK-Swiss initiatives have funded joint projects in life sciences, AI, and green energy.

Swiss and UK R&I collaboration (bilateral relationship, Horizon Europe)

- The UK-Swiss Science and Innovation MoU was signed by BEIS and SERI in November 2022. It sets out our shared ambitions under three pillars: one, deep science & deep tech; two, innovation; and three, policy collaboration and exchange. The MoU is made up of two parts, the first being the MoU proper as a stable framework for collaboration and the second the annexes which identify current priorities and activities.
- The MOU has identified several areas of focus such as life sciences, energy and cleantech, climate, artificial intelligence, data, space and quantum. However, collaboration is encouraged across all fields.
- Significant collaboration and activity under the 3 MOU pillars on deep science, innovation and policy collaboration and exchange. Progress is monitored and new ideas for collaboration identified at Annual Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) alongside S&I actors (UKRI, Innovate UK, STFC and Swiss counterparts). Last JCM took place in London on 21st November 2025 hosted by Minister Vallance.

Innovate UK Innosuisse collaboration

- The 2 funding agencies ran 2 rounds of the Collaborative R&D competition in 2023 and 2024, [redacted - 30(b)(i)]
- For Innovate UK the competitions with Switzerland have been Innovate UK's most popular international bilateral competitions over the last 3 years.
- In addition to the CRD competitions, IUK has been running a series of Global Expert Missions and highly successful Global Business Innovation Programme Delegations to Switzerland (with BE BERNE and Innosuisse support) targeting the following sectors: AI in Construction; Semiconductors, a Antimicrobial Resistance and Engineering Biology.

Strategic priorities for 2025–2028

- Systemic innovation – fostering integrated approaches across sectors.
- Flagship projects in digitalisation – advancing digital transformation initiatives.
- Flagship projects in sustainability – promoting green and sustainable technologies.
- Quantum research – supporting cutting-edge quantum technology development

ANNEX C: BACKGROUND BRIEFING

Innovation

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- In Scotland, innovation is an intrinsic part of our culture, our society and our economy - it's how we tackle climate change, improve public health, and create high-quality jobs.
- Our goal is clear: to position Scotland as one of the most innovative small nations in the world. And with the talent, creativity, and ambition we have - there's no reason we can't lead the way.
- We remain firmly committed to backing Scotland's researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs, and are taking decisive action.
- This includes:
 - Unlocking opportunities for high value clusters with £5 million provided to support Scotland's high growth industries.
 - Investing almost £3 million through a Proof of Concept Fund to support researchers to develop their innovative ideas and technologies and bridge the gap between groundbreaking research and commercial applications.
 - Establishing a Deep Tech Super Cluster to support companies on their journey to manufacturing at scale.
 - Establishing the Scottish Technology Council to provide expert insight into the opportunities and the challenges facing our tech sector.
 - Launching our AI Scotland programme, including a pilot scheme for SMEs that positions Scotland as a creator and supplier of AI technologies.

In December 2024, to support even closer ties between both countries, Innovate UK and the Swiss innovation authority Innosuisse awarded circa £8 million in joint funding to 11 UK-Swiss research projects. These range from work on new antibacterial coatings that could prevent infections during hip and knee replacements, to using quantum tech to develop a new generation of cheap, specialised sensors for use in anti-counterfeiting, manufacturing quality control, and more. The projects bring together UK and Swiss businesses, research institutes and universities. This builds on previous UK-Switzerland Collaborative R&D funding which supported cutting edge work ranging from developing new ways of capturing CO2 emissions, to developing robot surgeons to improve stroke treatment.

Background

Scotland's National Innovation Strategy

- Scotland's National Innovation Strategy sets out an ambitious plan to increase innovation levels across Scotland.
- Published in 2023, the strategy sets out actions aimed at utilising innovation as a driver to grow the economy and create jobs in areas of strength.
- Focus areas include:
 - Energy transition
 - Health and life sciences
 - Advanced manufacturing
 - Data and digital technologies
- Since publishing Scotland's National Innovation Strategy, we have been working closely with key partners to develop and deliver its four programmes.
 - **New market clusters**, working collaboratively across the broader public sector, academia and industry we are establishing a Cluster Development

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programme to build world leading excellence in those priority areas where Scotland has the educational, industrial and natural assets necessary to be truly world class.

- **Entrepreneurship / commercialisation**, maximising the economic impact of university spin-outs and further commercialising academic research;
 - **Innovation Funding** - reviewing funding and support by the public sector in Scotland.
 - A **Productivity Programme** will support more of our SMEs to innovate and increase productivity through connection with our innovation architecture.
- Together these programmes aim to embed an investor mindset across innovation support in Scotland and move to a more strategic and targeted approach to investing in the areas which have been identified as our priorities.

Life Sciences

- Life Sciences is an innovative, high-growth sector identified as an economic priority area by the Scottish Government through publication of the **National Strategy for Economic Transformation (2022)** and **Scotland's National Innovation Strategy (2023)**.
- The economic and health benefits Life Sciences can deliver for Scotland has been recognised by the Scottish Government through publication of:
 - **Life Sciences Export Plan (2022)**
 - **Inward Investment Plan (2022)**
 - **Digital Health and Care Strategy (2021)**
- The UK Innovation Survey 2021 reported 80.8% of Scottish Life Sciences businesses were innovation active in the previous three years – compared to a rate of 39.0% more generally across the Scottish business base.
- Scotland has excellent public research institutions producing world leading Life Sciences research and development (R&D). Over the next 10 years, the **National Innovation Strategy** aims to harness innovative research within Scotland and create a bold entrepreneurial ecosystem centred around universities as engine for growth, supporting a pipeline of scalable university spin-outs.
- Implementing Scotland's **National Innovation Strategy** will put Scottish universities R&D at the heart of the economy, leveraging public sector funding to its maximum value, and capitalising on cross sectoral collaboration.
- The largest sub-sectoral contributors to total Gross Value Add (GVA) in Scottish Life Sciences are Medtech and Pharma Services & Contract Research, with high growth sub-sectors including Pharmaceuticals, Digital Health, Agritech and Therapeutics.

The UK and Switzerland are also key global players in life sciences – with the UK's life sciences sector worth £108 billion, and Switzerland home to major companies like Roche and Novartis. Both countries are building on their positions of strength in life sciences, with the £8 million joint funding call to support UK-Swiss clinical trials, that could deliver new treatments and diagnoses for a range of diseases that are currently affecting patients across both countries. The work is overseen by the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), the research delivery arm of

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the Department of Health and Social Care, and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

AI

Key Messages

- In May 2025, the updated PfG made a public commitment for the Scottish Government to:
- “Ensure Scotland is a supplier/creator of AI, and not just a consumer of these transformational technologies. This requires us to ensure a balanced and self-sustaining ecosystem of AI start-ups, scale-ups, and larger suppliers, promote Scotland’s expertise internationally and attract more talent and investment to Scotland. To deliver this we will:
 - Launch AI Scotland as a new, national transformation programme founded on a partnership of business, academia, agencies and government
 - Launch a national AI adoption programme for SMEs, working collaboratively with partners to deliver more seamless advice and competitive grants to those at the earliest stages of AI awareness and adoption as well as those SMEs who are further along.”

Current Activity

- We are working to advance the PfG commitment to develop an AI Scotland programme. This means:
 - convening a dedicated AI Sub-group of the Scottish Technology Council, and leveraging their knowledge and expertise to support the development of our new AI Strategy and the establishment of AI Scotland
 - working with the Data Lab and other key partners, to build capacity to deliver AI Scotland
 - preparing an initial draft of a new AI Strategy, for consultation with a range of stakeholders
 - working with relevant officials and partners to understand the ‘AI skills gap,’ and to map out capacity to respond to the need for dedicated skills provision on AI
 - planning a programme of consultation and engagement ahead of a launch event in Spring 2026.
 - supporting work across government influencing UKG’ policy and strategy and funding opportunities (UKG AI Growth Zones)

Key stats

- Compared to other UK regions, Scotland ranks fourth in AI investment growth between 2020 – 2024. Investment in AI in Scotland has been growing at an average annual rate of 35% between 2020-2024 amounting to \$53mn in 2024 (and behind North-East, East Midlands, North-West) (Technation, 2025). In 2024, the Digital Technologies sector in Scotland was valued at £6.87bn, making up 4.7% of the country’s total economic output (ScotlandIS, 2025)

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- Between 2014 and 2024, the sector's Gross Value Added (GVA) grew by an average of 7.1% each year, far outpacing Scotland's overall economic growth of 0.5% during the same period (ScotlandIS, 2025).
- The tech industry is expected to continue growing at 1.5 times the rate of Scotland's overall economy until 2029 (ScotlandIS, 2025)
- Companies see the biggest new opportunities in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, which has grown steadily from 43% in 2023 to 69% in 2025, indicating strong momentum in AI adoption. (ScotlandIS, 2025)
- While there is considerable interest and optimism about AI's potential, the actual adoption rates reflect a more cautious approach, with many businesses still in the exploratory stages or implementing AI in limited capacities. (ScotlandIS, 2025)

Economic Growth

- Boosting economic growth is a top priority for this government - it is key to both raising living standards in Scotland and funding the public services that we all rely on.
- Our economy continues to be one of the best performing parts of the UK and since 2007, GDP per person in Scotland has grown by 10.3%, compared to 6.8% in the UK and productivity has grown at an average rate of 0.9% per year compared to the UK average of 0.3%.
- Our Economic Strategy sets the overarching vision for Scotland's economy, and the 2025 Programme for Government set out some of the short-term priority actions we are taking over the remainder of this parliament to drive economic growth in Scotland.
- Our National Strategy for Economic Transformation latest report shows that just three years in 44% of original actions now complete including:
 - Over 82,500 connections delivered through the Reaching 100% (R100) broadband programme.
 - Leveraged up to £670mn in private investment for offshore wind supply chain and ports, backed by £150mn public sector investment.
 - Scotland's Green Freeports are attracting early-stage investment. Sumitomo's £350m and Haventus' £300m commitments are being followed by further investments from Forth Ports (£50m in Leith) and Mitsui at the Port of Nigg.
 - Our Enterprise Agencies have supported over 16,100 jobs and helped unlock £1.37bn in planned capital investment.
 - Fair Work conditionality applied to over £3.42bn of public sector grants (between April 2024 and March 2025).

AI Public Sector


- Public sector investment in AI is creating a powerful flywheel for innovation. As AI transforms service delivery in areas like health, education, and transport, it presents major opportunities for companies to engage, collaborate and expand.
- Scotland is home to world-class AI talent and infrastructure. Our universities produce top-tier graduates in AI, data science, and engineering. The University of Edinburgh is also home to the UK's national supercomputer

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which provides cutting-edge compute capacity to support AI research, public sector innovation, and industry collaboration at scale.

- Our award-winning CivTech programme is a global exemplar of public-private innovation. It enables startups and SMEs to co-develop AI-powered solutions to real-world public sector challenges. The current CivTech 11 cohort places AI at the heart of its approach which helps accelerate the development of ethical, impactful technologies.

6. WORKING LUNCH WITH LAURENT WEHRLI, NATIONAL COUNCIL FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIR

What	Working lunch meeting with Laurent Wehrli, Chair of the National Council Foreign Affairs Committee
Where	Bundeshaus, Bundesplatz 3, 3005 Bern
When	Thursday 27 November, 13.00-14.30
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delighted to be in Bern to celebrate St Andrew’s Day and explore opportunities to strengthen our cooperation with Switzerland. Looking forward to continuing to strengthen our partnership across many areas, especially around trade, life sciences, innovation, fintech, renewable energy and space. • The Scottish Government is keen to see trade increase with Switzerland in a way that is consistent with our principles in Scotland’s Vision for Trade. Any new trade agreement must serve the best interests of Scotland: our economy, people and planet. • We welcomed the recently announcement of the extension of the UK-Switzerland Services Mobility Agreement (SMA) and support efforts to secure permanent business mobility arrangements through the ongoing negotiations on an enhanced UK-Switzerland SMA. • We are also keen that existing levels of market access granted through the UK-Switzerland trade continuity agreement are maintained and that opportunities are explored to improve access to Swiss markets for Scottish producers. • On space, acknowledge Switzerland’s strong reputation for precision engineering and innovation in space technologies alongside their space sustainability achievements, including their leading Space debris removal programme – ClearSpace. Note the shared values of sustainability and complimentary technological excellence between Switzerland and Scotland. • Offer up the details of the chairs of the ETF to explore collaborative opportunities. Offer the details of Space Scotland to explore collaborations with the Scottish space sector, connect to our innovation research landscape, and connect with supply chain opportunities. • Given the current international situation and the resulting global insecurity, cooperation with the rest of Europe and the European Union is more important now than ever. • I welcome the recent Switzerland-EU agreements on programmes and the forthcoming package due before the end of the year, as these open more opportunities for collaboration with Scotland (esp. Horizon). • Ask how Wehrli expects cantons to be involved in the next steps of the EU association agreement process (e.g. referendum) and whether they expect any difficulties in getting the budget for Erasmus (for 2027) approved.
Who	<p>Laurent Wehrli is a Swiss politician representing the FDP (Liberals) who has served in the National Council (Lower House) since 2015, including as Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee since December 2023. He is an experienced parliamentarian, mayor, and international advocate with a strong record in diplomacy, education, and cultural affairs. Prior to his national role, Wehrli was a member of the Council of the Canton of Vaud from 2002-2015. He has also held the position of Mayor of Montreux for several years. His civic engagement includes leadership in the Swiss fire brigade and</p> 

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	<p>military service as a Lieutenant Colonel. Wehrli owns and directs a trust company and is active in international development projects. He is a French-speaker with working proficiency in German and English.</p>
Why	<p>A good opportunity to strengthen relations with the influential Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee and discuss opportunities to strengthen cooperation with the UK. It will also enable a discussion on global developments, including US trade relations and the UK-EU reset. Switzerland was subject to 39% tariffs on goods to the US market since 1 August and despite recent positive negotiations in Washington, challenging 15% tariffs remain.</p>
Supporting officials	<p>[redacted - s38(1)(b)]</p>
Briefing contents	<p>Refer to Annex 4A (Background Briefing for Patric Franzen), which also covers key information for this meeting.</p>
Media handling	<p>See separate Comms plan</p>
Social media	<p>See separate Comms plan</p>

7. MEETING WITH UK-GERMANY PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUP

What	Meeting with MdBs from the Bundestag's UK-Germany Parliamentary Friendship Group (in German)
Where	Jakob-Kaiser-Haus (arrival at Paul-Löbe-Haus, Eingang West, 10.20)
When	Friday 28 November, 10.30-11.30
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delighted to have the opportunity to meet the Friendship Group • Scotland and Germany share historical links reaching back to the Lübeck Letter and beyond • We have political MOUs with 5 Bundesländer (Bayern, Baden-Württemberg, Rheinland-Pfalz, Nordrhein Westfalen and Hamburg), and cooperation agreements with Bremen and Niedersachsen on space and research respectively. We established our Germany representative office in 2018. • I was pleased to see the UK-Germany Kensington Treaty signed in the summer and hope that this will serve to bring our nations even closer together [redacted - 30(b)(i)] • There are many shared challenges on which cooperation between Germany and Scotland could prove game-changing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On hydrogen, where Scotland has over 90 projects at varying stages of development, the vast majority of which are for renewable hydrogen production. ○ On CCUS, where Scottish carbon capture projects by Acorn in Aberdeenshire and Veri Energy in Shetland could between them store 10-20 million tonnes of carbon a year by the early 2030s. Scottish waters in total hold an estimated 53 billion tonnes of carbon storage capacity. ○ On space, where Scotland produces more small satellites than anywhere else in Europe, and will next year see the vertical launch of a German rocket from Saxavord spaceport in the Shetland Islands ○ On research, where the DAAD and Royal Society of Edinburgh launched a Joint Projects Research Fund last year, and the 2025 Lower Saxony-Scotland Research and Innovation Scheme was noted as a key initiative in the Kensington Treaty ○ On culture, where 200,000 Scots travelled to Germany last year for the Euros, receiving the warmest of welcomes. • Would like to extend an invitation to the whole group to visit Scotland at an appropriate point next year. Catherine Reeves, Head of the SG Germany Office, and [redacted - s38(1)(b)] for the Friendship Group within the British Embassy, would be happy to make the arrangements.

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Who	<p>17 MdB members of the UK-Germany Parliamentary Friendship Group (along with the clerk and two staffers), including chairman Sebastian Roloff (SPD), Katrin Uhlig who recently visited Scotland (Bündnis/Die Grüne), Stephan Mayer (CDU/CSU), and Dr Ottilie Klein (CDU/CSU).</p> <p>[redacted - 30(b)(i)]</p>
Why	<p>The UK-Germany Parliamentary Friendship Group was reconvened in September following the 2025 German elections and summer recess.</p> <p>This meeting is an opportunity for Cab Sec CEAC to meet and build relations with the new members, set out the Scottish offer to Germany in priority areas of mutual interest, and invite the group to visit Scotland next year.</p>
Supporting officials	<p>Catherine Reeves [redacted - s38(1)(b)]</p>
Briefing contents	<p>Annex A: Agenda Annex B: Suggested points to make in introductory statement (separate attachment) Annex C: Biographies of attendees</p>
Media handling	<p>See separate Comms plan</p>
Social media	<p>See separate Comms plan</p>

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ANNEX A: AGENDA

- 10.20: Arrival (Paul Löbe Haus, Eingang West)
- 10.20-10.30: Registration and transit to meeting room
- 10.30-10.35: Introductions and chair's welcome (Sebastian Roloff)
- 10.35-10.45: Cabinet Secretary's opening remarks
- 10.45-11.30: Floor open for general discussion and Q&A
- 11.30: Departure (via Paul Löbe Haus, Eingang Süd)

ANNEX C: BIOGRAPHIES OF ATTENDEES



Sebastian Roloff MdB, Vorsitzender of the UK-Germany Parliamentary Friendship Group, is a German lawyer and SPD politician who entered the Bundestag in 2021 as the representative for Munich South. He succeeds Jens Zimmermann, who lost his seat in the German federal elections in 2025.

Roloff has a longstanding interest in social justice and economic policy, and serves as a member of the Committee on Economic Affairs in the Bundestag, where he acts as rapporteur on issues such as self-employment, postal services, competition law, and industrial transformation. Within the SPD parliamentary group, Roloff is aligned with the Parliamentary Left and co-chairs the party's left-wing forum DL 21 ("das Forum Demokratische Linke").



Dr. Günther Krings MdB, Stellvertretende Vorsitzender (CDU/CSU) of the Friendship Group, is a German lawyer and politician from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). He has represented North Rhine-Westphalia in the Bundestag since 2002 (the region of Germany where Scotland has its most promising cooperations on energy in particular). A graduate of the University of Cologne, Krings studied law and history before earning a Master of Laws at Temple University in Philadelphia as a Fulbright scholar. He has taught public law as an honorary professor at the University of Cologne since 2010.

Krings served as Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of the Interior under Chancellor Angela Merkel, where he was closely involved in shaping domestic and security policy. Since 2025, he has been deputy chair of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, responsible for legal affairs, consumer protection, and internal policy.

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Pascal Meiser, Stellvertretende Vorsitzender (*Die Linke*) of the Friendship Group (position awaiting confirmation), was born in Saabrücken and studied in Lebach, Mainz, Leeds and Berlin, graduating in political science in 2005. After training as a trade union secretary with IG Metall, he worked as a parliamentary assistant and later held senior roles in *Die Linke*'s federal office, including as head of campaigns and party development.

Meiser first entered the Bundestag in 2017, serving until 2024 (when he lost his seat in the Berlin repeat election). He returned following the 2025 election as the directly elected representative for Berlin-Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg – Prenzlauer Berg Ost. In parliament, he focuses on economic and labor policy, housing, and social rights, as a member of the Committee for Work and Social Affairs and the Committee for Housing, Urban Development, Construction and Local Authorities.



Prof. Dr. Daniel Zerbin MdB, Stellvertretende Vorsitzender (AfD) of the Friendship Group, is a German criminologist and politician representing the Alternative für Deutschland. Born in Gelsenkirchen, he has been a Member of the Bundestag since 2025, after previously serving in the Landtag of North Rhine-Westphalia from 2022 to 2025. Since 2017, he has held a professorship in criminal science at the Northern Business School in Hamburg. His earlier career included service as an officer in the Bundeswehr's military police, where he was deployed to Afghanistan, among other roles.

Zerbin was a CDU member until 2016, when he joined the AfD, rising to regional leadership positions. In his role in the Bundestag, he focuses on defense and internal security issues, and is a member of the Defence Committee.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]



Alexis Giersch MdB, a member of the Friendship Group, is an AfD politician. He is also a senior member of the Hamburger Burschenschaft Germania, which is classified in Hamburg as a right-wing extremist organisation (though not banned). Born in London, he entered the Bundestag following the 2025 elections via the Schleswig-Holstein state list. Before entering politics, Giersch trained in electrical engineering and emergency medical services, and served in the German Navy from 1987 to 1997, where he worked as a nautical watch officer on submarines, later working on container ships. He has previously served as a policy

adviser for AfD parliamentary groups at both federal and state levels. He is a member of the Transport Committee.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

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Chantal Kopf MdB, Stellvertretende Vorsitzender (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) of the Friendship Group, was born in Baden-Baden and studied political science and English & American studies at the University of Freiburg. She gained early political experience working in the constituency offices of Kerstin Andreae MdB and Thomas Marwein MdL, and served as chair of the Green Party in Freiburg from 2018 to 2021 as well as a member of the Baden-Württemberg state executive board.

In the 2021 federal election, Kopf won a direct mandate for the Freiburg constituency and entered the Bundestag, where she focuses on European affairs as member of the Committee on EU Affairs and as spokesperson for European policy within her parliamentary group. She also participates in the Franco-German Parliamentary Assembly and holds leadership roles in pro-European organizations, including serving as vice president of Europa-Union Deutschland, the German pro-EU citizens' initiative, since 2023.



Dr. Hendrik Hoppenstedt MdB, a member of the Friendship Group, is a CDU politician originally from Großburgwedel in Lower Saxony. After completing his school education (including a year in Abingdon), he served in the Bundeswehr and trained as a reserve officer, before studying law in Passau, Lausanne, and Würzburg. Following his legal clerkship in Hannover, he worked for Allianz Versicherungs-AG in Berlin and practiced as a lawyer.

From 2005 to 2013, he served as mayor of Burgwedel before entering the Bundestag in 2013 as the directly elected representative for Hannover-Land I. He served as Minister of State at the Federal Chancellery from 2018 to 2021 under Chancellor Angela Merkel, responsible for bureaucracy reduction and federal-state relations. Since 2021, Hoppenstedt has been Parliamentary Secretary of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group and holds roles in the Bundestag's Council of Elders and as Obmann in the Committee for Election Review, Immunity and Rules of Procedure.

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Dr. Otilie Klein MdB, a member of the Friendship Group, is a CDU politician who has been a member of the Bundestag since 2021 and currently serves as Secretary General for the CDU in Berlin. She studied at the University of Bonn, spending a year abroad at Mount Holyoke College in the USA, and later earned a master's degree from the University of Oxford. From 2010 to 2016, she completed a binational PhD at the Justus Liebig University in Giessen and the University of Helsinki.

Klein began her career at the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung before moving into politics, working as a research associate in the Bundestag and later as Head of Strategy for the CDU parliamentary group in the Berlin House of Representatives. From 2020 to 2021, she served as department director at the Association of German Public Banks. Elected to the Bundestag in 2021 (including holding onto her seat in the Berlin repeat election of 2024), she represents Berlin and serves on committees for Work and Social Affairs, and for Culture and Media (where she is the nominated CDU/CSU spokesperson).



Katrin Uhlig MdB, a member of the Friendship Group, is a Bündnis 90/Die Grüne politician. Originally from Duisburg, she studied linguistics and economic and cultural studies at the universities of Passau, Peking and San Juan, and worked in the Hague, before taking up a post as a research assistant on climate and energy to the Greens in North-Rhine Westphalia. Following a period leading the office of Oliver Krischer MdB, she was elected to the Bundestag in 2021, representing the constituency of Bonn, initially as a directly elected MdB and from the 2025 election onwards as a list candidate.

Uhlig serves on the Budget Committee and on the Energy and Economy Committee in the Bundestag (she had hoped to meet Cab Sec CEAC during his September visit, but diaries could not be made to align). She visited Scotland in October, where she travelled to Aberdeen (accompanied by [redacted - s38(1)(b)]) to meet Cab Sec NZE in her constituency office and visit the Net Zero Technology Centre. She gave the Cabinet Secretary helpful advice on raising awareness of Scotland's carbon capture and storage offer in Germany, which the SG Germany Office will act on.

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Tobias Winkler MdB, originally from Nuremberg, is a CSU politician who was elected to the Bundestag in 2021 on a direct mandate for the Fürth constituency, and a member of the Friendship Group. He studied political science in Munich, and served as a local councillor and sport representative in Roßtal from 2002 to 2007, later serving as CSU faction leader and deputy mayor. He has worked as office manager for senior members of the European Parliament, including Vice-President Dr. Ingo Friedrich and former President Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, before becoming head of the European Parliament's liaison office in Munich from 2015 to 2021. He was also a lecturer at the Technical University of Nuremberg between 2016 and 2020. In the Bundestag, he is a member of the Committee on EU Affairs and the Foreign Affairs Committee, and of the Subcommittee for International Order, the United Nations and International Organisations.



Jan Köstering MdB, originally from Ratingen, is a member of the Friendship Group and represents North Rhine-Westphalia for *Die Linke*. He worked in a car repair workshop and later trained as a certified automotive mechatronics technician, completing his qualification in 2018. Politically active from a young age, Köstering joined *Die Linke* in November 2017 and became district spokesperson for the party in Oberberg. He entered local politics in 2020, winning seats on the Nümbrecht municipal council and the Oberberg district council, and was elected to the party's state executive in North Rhine-Westphalia in 2022, focusing on migration, sports, and antifascism. He secured a Bundestag seat via the state list in the 2025 election. In parliament, Köstering serves on the Home Affairs Committee.



Ulrich Thoden MdB, born near Münster, is a member of the Friendship Group and represents *Die Linke* in the Bundestag. He studied Catholic Theology at the University of Münster, and later qualified as a secondary school teacher, teaching English, Latin, Philosophy, and Catholic Religion.

He joined *Die Linke* in 2018 and served as a spokesperson for the Münster municipal group from 2020 to 2024, becoming deputy state spokesperson for *Die Linke NRW* in 2022. In the 2025 federal election, Thoden entered the Bundestag via the North Rhine-Westphalia state list. He is the defence policy spokesperson for his parliamentary group, an Obmann in the Defence Committee, and a member of the German delegations to the NATO and OSCE Parliamentary Assemblies.

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Stephan Mayer MdB, is a member of the friendship group who has represented the Altötting constituency in the Bundestag for the Bavarian CSU since 2022. Prior to entering politics, he worked as a lawyer specialising in economic and administrative law. Mayer entered politics in 1994 through the Junge Union and has held numerous leadership roles within the CSU. He was first elected to the Bundestag in 2002 and has since built a reputation as an expert on internal security and sports policy. From 2018-2021, he was Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, and briefly served as Secretary-General of the CSU in 2022.

Currently, he is the CDU/CSU spokesperson on sport and volunteering, and sits on the Foreign Affairs and Sport and Volunteering Committees. He is also active in organizations such as the Technisches Hilfswerk, where he previously served as president of the federal association.



Dr. Maria-Lena Weiss (CDU) is a member of the friendship group who has represented the constituency of Rottweil-Tuttlingen in Baden-Württemberg in the Bundestag for the CDU since 2021. Prior to entering politics, she worked as a lawyer specialising in energy and administrative law. She has been involved in politics since joining the Junge Union in 1998, including as chair of the CDU district association in Tuttlingen since 2015 and as a city councillor in Mühlheim an der Donau since 2014. In the Bundestag, her priorities include climate protection, energy policy, sustainable development and health. She currently sits on the Health Committee and is a deputy member of the Economic Affairs

& Energy, and Environment Committees.



Christoph Frauenpreiß MdB, a member of the Friendship Group, is a CDU/CSU politician originally from Cuxhaven in Lower Saxony, and entered the Bundestag in 2025 as the directly elected representative for Cuxhaven – Stade II. Before entering politics, he worked for many years in banking, most recently as a branch manager and corporate client advisor.

Politically active since joining the Junge Union in 2003, Frauenpreiß served as chair of the CDU city association in Cuxhaven, as a member of the city council, and as Mayor of Altenbruch. In parliament, Frauenpreiß focuses on agriculture, fisheries, and rural development, serving on the Committee for Agriculture, Nutrition and Homeland and acting as the fisheries policy spokesperson for the CDU/CSU parliamentary group. In November 2025, he was elected President of the German Fisheries Association, reflecting his strong ties to the maritime economy of his home region.

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Dr. Thomas Gebhart MdB, a member of the Friendship Group, is a CDU politician who has represented Southern Palatinat in the Bundestag since 2009. He studied political science and business administration in Mannheim and Birmingham, before beginning his career as an assistant to former CDU politician Heiner Geißler. He later worked in the environmental, safety, and energy division of chemicals company BASF.

From 2003 to 2009, Gebhart served as a member of the Rhineland-Palatinate state parliament, where he was the CDU's spokesperson on environmental policy. From 2018 to 2021, he was Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Health under the Merkel administration. In parliament, Gebhart focuses on environmental and climate policy, where he advocates for climate protection through market-based solutions, and serves on the Committee for Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety. He is the Obmann for the CDU/CSU group in the Committee on Climate Protection and Energy.



Carl-Philipp Sassenrath MdB (*NB leaving the meeting early at 11.00*) is a member of the Friendship Group and a CDU politician from Neuss in NRW, having been elected to represent the constituency Neuss I in 2025. He studied law at the universities of Heidelberg and Münster, undertaking placements at the Federal Chancellery, the German Foreign Office, and a commercial law firm, before working as a research assistant in constitutional and administrative law at the Free University Berlin. He worked as a civil servant in the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action and the Federal Ministry of

Health, focusing on innovation and crisis management, and served from 2022 to 2025 as a policy advisor for economic, climate, and energy issues in the CDU/CSU parliamentary group.

Sassenrath was previously deputy federal chair of the youth section of the German Council on Foreign Relations, and worked as editor-in-chief of the conservative debate magazine *CIVIS mit Sonde*. In parliament, he serves on the Transport Committee, the Committee for Legal Affairs and Consumer Protection, and the Subcommittee on European Law.

CABINET SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTION, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND CULTURE, VISIT TO SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY 26-28 NOVEMBER 2025

8. VISIT TO BABELSBERG FILM STUDIO

What	Visit to Babelsberg Film Studio in Potsdam
Where	Haus 62, August-Bebel-Straße 26-53, 14482 Potsdam
When	Friday 28 th November at 13.30
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scottish Government is a strong supporter of our screen sector. We are committed to seizing the significant opportunities for growth, and working with our dedicated public body, Screen Scotland, to maximise the cultural and economic benefits that the sector brings. • We are focused on building the skills, talent, support system and infrastructure to capitalise on the continued strong interest in production in Scotland, and continue to develop our sustainable creative economy. • We are committed to increasing the scale and ambition of Scottish film and television finding success on the global stage, giving voice to our diverse storytelling talent, and giving authentic representation to our varied, vibrant cultures. • We want Scotland to have a strong, sustainable studio ecosystem, and we will continue to work with partners to stimulate conditions for studio and infrastructural growth across Scotland. • The Scottish Government is clear that we must support our culture and creative sectors to thrive both domestically and internationally. • We all know how uniquely important international activity is to these sectors - in terms of reaching new audiences, generating income, collaborating and building vital networks across borders, and showcasing Scotland’s creative sectors internationally. • We are open for business and keen to encourage meaningful co-production. Germany and Scotland have a strong record of co-production success (both financially and creatively), for example with films like “Falling Into Place” (2023), “The Outrun” (2024), and the documentary “Merkel” (2022). • On UK-EU summit and international mobility, it is disappointing that the recent summit did not reach any agreements relating to culture. • We would still like to see the UK re-join the Creative Europe Programme and see a mobility agreement for touring artists. It is important that we recognise that creative professionals are still facing barriers to working and collaborating internationally as a result of Brexit. • We stand ready to work collaboratively with the UK Government and wider partners to re-build a closer relationship with the rest of Europe.
Who	<p>Jörg Bachmaier, CEO Studio Babelsberg AG Marcus Loges, producer and managing director of our production service provider Studio Babelsberg Motion Pictures GmbH Eike Wolf, Head of Studio Operations Member of the Management Board Studio Babelsberg AG Michael Düwel, Managing Director of the Art Department Studio Babelsberg GmbH and Member of the Management Board of Studio Babelsberg AG Noosha Aubel, newly elected Mayor of the City of Potsdam (Independent)</p>

CABINET SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTION, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND
CULTURE, VISIT TO SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY 26-28 NOVEMBER 2025

Why	Opportunity to visit Europe’s biggest film studio and the oldest large-scale film studio in the world, home of productions from <i>Der blaue Engel</i> to <i>Babylon Berlin</i> , to see their facilities, learn about their business model, and discuss opportunities for Scotland to deepen connections and learn from Babelsberg’s example.
Supporting officials	Catherine Reeves – Head of Scottish Government Office Berlin [redacted - s38(1)(b)]
Briefing contents	Annex A: Event programme Annex B: Biographies of attendees Annex C: Supplementary briefing
Media handling	See separate Comms plan
Social media	See separate Comms plan

CABINET SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTION, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND
CULTURE, VISIT TO SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY 26-28 NOVEMBER 2025

ANNEX A – EVENT PROGRAMME

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 13:25 | Arrive at Haus 62, Studio Babelsberg |
| 13:30 – 14:00 | Discussion with the Board of Directors and the Management of Studio Babelsberg (the new Mayor of the City of Potsdam Noosha Aibel will also be in attendance). |
| 14:00 – 14:20 | Discussion on possibilities for cooperation with Film University Babelsberg and lessons for Scottish Film and Screen Studies with the university's President Prof. Dr. Susanne Stürmer |
| 14:20 - 14:50 | Tour of the studio with all participants |

ANNEX B – BIOGRAPHIES OF ATTENDEES



Noosha Aubel, Mayor of the City of Potsdam, is an Independent and was elected to her post with 72.9% of the vote on 12 October. It is the first time a woman has been directly elected to the role, and the end of a 35-year run of SPD mayors in Potsdam. Previously the city's Deputy Mayor for Youth, Culture and Sport, Aubel left office in 2023 as a result of disagreements with

then-Mayor Mike Schubert. She campaigned for the mayoralty on a platform of competent administration, safety and quality of life, placing emphasis on her own 20 years' experience in local government. Her headline pledges include providing improved support and physical space for cultural activities and sport.

Aubel was born in Hannover, studied in Cologne and Bochum, and has a background as an educational specialist helping families with multiple disadvantages. She held previous roles in the local governments of Viersen and Hilden (both in NRW), before taking up the deputy mayorality of Potsdam in 2017.



Jörg Bachmaier, CEO [Studio Babelsberg AG](#)

Jörg Bachmaier has more than 20 years of experience in leading global companies in the film and television industry as well as in the field of content development and production. Bachmaier has held management positions in the USA at Warner Bros. Entertainment and Endemol, at BBC Studios in London and at ZDF Studios in Germany.

Jörg Bachmaier studied law at the University of Heidelberg.



Marcus Loges is producer and managing director of the production service provider [Studio Babelsberg Motion Pictures GmbH](#)

Marcus has been working in the film industry for German and international TV and film productions for over 30 years, first as a freelance production manager and production manager, later as a line producer and producer.

He is known for *Babylon Berlin* and *The Queen's Gambit* (for which he was awarded a Golden Globe and an Emmy). At Studio Babelsberg, he has been involved in the productions *Enemy at the Gates* (director: Jean-Jacques Annaud), *The Bourne Conspiracy* (Paul Greengrass), *V for Vendetta* (James McTeigue), *Cloud Atlas* and most recently *Babylon Berlin* (Henk Handloegten, Achim von Borries, Tom Tykwer) as line producer or executive producer.

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Eike Wolf, Head of [Studio Operations](#) Member of the Management Board Studio Babelsberg AG

Eike Wolf took over as Head of Studio Operations & Marketing at Studio Babelsberg AG in August 2017 and is a member of the Executive Board. He leads the Ateliers & Studios division and is responsible for marketing and new customer business, with a focus on project acquisition and partnership expansion. Eike has been working for Studio Babelsberg since 2006, previously as company spokesman and head of corporate communications and investor relations.

Eike is a trained banker and studied business administration and communication science in the advertising industry; he has also worked as an independent management consultant.



Michael Düwel, Managing Director of [the Art Department Studio Babelsberg GmbH](#) and Member of the Management Board of Studio Babelsberg AG.

He leads the Art Department, the creative and technical heart of the studio, and specialises in crafting indoor and outdoor sets for film, television, and other projects like exhibitions and events.



Professor Dr Susanne Stürmer, President of the [Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf](#)

Professor Dr Stürmer has been President of Film University Babelsberg, Germany's oldest and largest film school, since October 2013. The university offers BA, MA and PhD programmes, with a curriculum that covers all aspects of filmmaking. She steered the institution through the process of gaining university status in 2014, and has since

focused on building its research profile in art, technology and science, and fostering closer relationships between the university and the film and media industries.

Professor Dr Stürmer holds a PhD in Economics from the Freie Universität Berlin, and has background in regulatory economics for telecoms and media. She was Managing Director of UFA GmbH, one of Germany's largest film and TV production companies, from 2006 to 2011, before becoming a part-time professor at the Film University and subsequently taking on its presidency.

ANNEX C – SUPPLEMENTARY BRIEFING

SCREEN SECTOR IN SCOTLAND

- The Economic Value of Screen Report 2023, published in 2025, shows the exceptional growth that Scotland's film and TV industries continue to experience, generating millions for the economy, creating thousands of jobs, and providing opportunities for skills and talent development in roles across the sector.
- Employment in Scotland's screen sector increased by 12.1%, from 10,940 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in 2021 to 12,260 FTEs in 2023.
- GVA in Scotland's screen sector increased by 14.5%, from £627.1 million in 2021 to £718.0 million in 2023.
- The Scottish Government is a strong supporter of our screen sector. We are committed to seizing the significant opportunities for growth, and working with our dedicated public body, Screen Scotland, to maximise the cultural and economic benefits that the sector brings.
- We are focused on building the skills, talent, support system and infrastructure to capitalise on the continued strong interest in production in Scotland, and continue to develop our sustainable creative economy.
- A recent PACT UK study found that 19% of all Screen Scotland focused funding went to Scottish co-productions, showing the huge value placed on the success of them in the Scottish sector.
- We are continually seeking new opportunities to support and grow the screen sector and we are committed to ensuring that the exceptional growth experienced in recent years continues to develop our sustainable creative economy, making Scotland an attractive production base for home grown and co-production opportunities.
- The funding, facilities, and specialist support available in Scotland mean that an ever-increasing number of top-quality productions are choosing to base themselves here, from films like Tetris to shows like The Rig.
- Inward investment in our screen sector is a key driver of our creative economy, and brings with it skills and talent development opportunities which contribute significantly to the sector's future sustainability.
- We see inward investment going hand-in-hand with developing our domestic production sector, and strengthening and deepening Scotland-based crews and creative talent. Intellectual property developed and anchored in Scotland is key to this ambition.
- We are committed to increasing the scale and ambition of Scottish film and television finding success on the global stage, giving voice to our diverse storytelling talent, and giving authentic representation to our varied, vibrant cultures.
- Screen Scotland continue to support exciting new projects in Scotland, such as the exciting new Richard Gadd project, Lions, and crime drama Department Q.
- We want Scotland to have a strong, sustainable studio ecosystem, and we will continue to work with partners to stimulate conditions for studio and infrastructural growth across Scotland.

INTERNATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXPORTS - GENERAL

TOP LINES

- The Scottish Government is clear that we must support our culture and creative sectors to thrive both domestically and internationally.
- We all know how uniquely important international activity is to these sectors - in terms of reaching new audiences, generating income, collaborating and building vital networks across borders, and showcasing Scotland's creative sectors internationally.
- As part of this, we cannot underestimate the value of cultural exports to the sector.

CULTURAL EXPORT SUPPORT – FEASIBILITY

TOP LINES

- The 2024 International Culture Strategy includes a commitment to carry out a feasibility study into the establishment of a support service for cultural export and exchange
- I am very happy to say that we are now taking that work forward, and over the coming months we will work closely with creative organisations, businesses and individuals to establish what forms of support could best help the sector to export services and goods internationally and to help our creative sectors to realise their potential.

Background

1. Representatives of the culture and creative industries sector have identified a need for additional support for international activity relating to exports, and support that is more consistent, comprehensive and accessible.
2. At present, much of the available support is provided by a range of organisations without a single point of contact and there are gaps in provision.
3. A bespoke service to support cultural export and exchange could play a key role in bringing together existing support, delivering more extensive support, and acting as an easily accessible point of contact for support.
4. Officials have carried out an initial assessment of existing export support services in different countries. A number of models focus on specific sub-sectors, frequently music, as is the case in Finland, France, Canada and others. In other cases, services have a far broader remit providing support to the culture sector as a whole, such as Wales Arts International, part of Arts Council Wales.
5. However, further data is required to establish which model of support would be most appropriate for Scotland and this is being explored by British Council Scotland.

UK-EU SUMMIT AND INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

TOP LINES

- It is disappointing that the recent UK-EU summit did not reach any agreements relating to culture.
- We would still like to see the UK re-join the Creative Europe Programme and see a mobility agreement for touring artists. It is important that we recognise that creative professionals are still facing barriers to working and collaborating internationally as a result of Brexit.

[redacted - 30(b)(i)]

CREATIVE EUROPE


TOP LINES

- The UK Government's decision not to seek to negotiate ongoing participation in Creative Europe has left a significant gap that cannot be filled by domestic programmes.
- The transnational framework through which the programme is delivered is vital to its success, ensuring that decisions are taken outside of the considerations of national organisations and keeping the focus only on the importance and value of cultural collaboration.
- The UK's reassociation to the Horizon Europe programme in January 2024 was undoubtedly a welcome move, enabling significant co-operation to take place in research and innovation between Scotland, the whole UK, and the EU. The decision signalled a desire for a long-term future alignment with the EU and which we hope will cover several EU budget cycles.
- Reassociating to the Creative Europe programme can offer a visible, positive quick win, which would underline a renewed commitment to close cooperative working with our EU partners.
- We stand ready to work collaboratively with the UK Government and wider partners to re-build a closer relationship with the rest of Europe.

Background

1. The Creative Europe Programme is the European Union's principal funding programme in support of the European culture and creative sector, including the screen sector.
2. It supports a wide range of activity but at its heart is a commitment to the importance of international cultural collaboration and the many positive impacts that it can achieve. Its budget in its current seven-year cycle is €2.44 billion.
3. Scottish organisations were prominent and valued participants in many Creative Europe projects and proportionately were very well-represented in work supported by the programme. This success brought important funding to these organisations, but most important were the connections that it supported them to make and the learning, development and innovation achieved through them.
4. A report into the value of Creative Europe in the UK published in 2018 highlighted both the financial and non-financial impacts of the programme. It found that funding had boosted job creation, output and exports, and led to additional investment being secured.
5. It supported organisations to develop international connections and networks in support of their work. And it also enabled innovation, research and development, supporting organisations to take risks and explore opportunities that otherwise would not have been open to them.

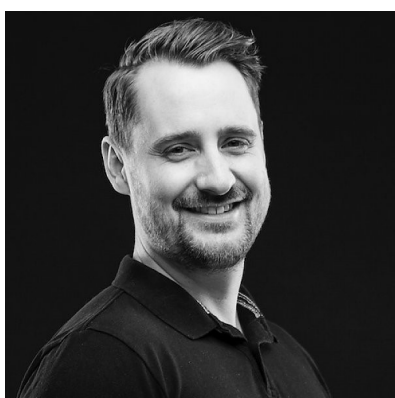
9. VISIT TO FLYING STEPS ACADEMY

What	Visit to the Flying Steps Academy for urban dance	
Where	Flying Steps Academy Kreuzberg, Lobeckstraße 30-35, 10969 Berlin	
When	Friday 28 November, 16.00-16.45	
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scottish Government values the importance of the performing arts and the important contribution dancers, and their projects make to the cultural, social and economic life in communities across the Scotland and on the international stage. • Dance Base is Scotland’s national centre for dance. They operate from purpose-built studios in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh running over 80 classes a week both online and in person including dance for health and wellbeing classes. • Dance is one of the four curriculum areas of Expressive Arts within Curriculum for Excellence. • Scotland has a wealth of outstanding festivals up and down the country. They are at the at the heart of our culture sector and national life and have just received a significant increase in funding. • 2024 saw the first official German showcase at the Edinburgh Fringe. • We are supportive of other opportunities for cultural partnership with Germany, such as the UK-Germany Cultural Bridge Programme. 	
Who		<p>Notker Schweikhardt is a German politician affiliated with Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and a former member of the Berlin House of Representatives. He studied stage and film design at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and subsequently worked in film and theatre as a set designer, costume designer, and art director. Schweikhardt joined the Green Party in 1988, focusing on cultural policy, and served as a parliamentary advisor in the Bundestag from 2012-14. In September 2014, he entered the Berlin House of Representatives as a substitute, securing a direct mandate in Schöneberg Nord in 2016. He served until 2021, advocating for cultural issues and civic engagement. Notker (who now works for Visit Berlin) is a long-time ally of the SG Germany Office, and connected us to the Flying Steps, whose work he champions (Joe Chialo, Wedl-Wilson’s predecessor, was also a supporter).</p>

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Wolfgang Hoffmann is the founder of Aurora Nova, a Berlin-based theatre booking agency. In 1990 he co-founded Fabrik Potsdam, transforming a squatted factory into one of Germany’s most innovative dance venues and launching the annual Potsdamer Tanztage festival. He achieved his breakthrough at the Edinburgh Fringe in 1998. Responding to the financial risks artists faced there, Hoffmann created Aurora Nova as an artist-led venue within the Fringe, pioneering a cooperative model to showcase physical theatre and dance. From 2004-8, he directed the Dublin Fringe Festival before returning to Berlin to establish Aurora Nova as a global agency in 2012. He maintains close connections with the Fringe, and personally curated an Edinburgh Fringe showcase on behalf of the Berlin office (paid for with GREAT funding) at short notice last summer, which played in the main Berlin fanzone during the 2024 Euros.



Stefan Lechermann is one of the CEOs of Flying Steps Entertainment GmbH, having joined the leadership team in 2020. His responsibilities include strategic development and partnerships.

He holds a degree in media management from Hochschule Mittweida. Under his leadership, Flying Steps has just expanded to a third site at Schloss Steglitz (in early November), and he has plans for a dedicated hip-hop theatre in Berlin, to provide a permanent stage for Flying Steps productions.

<p>Why</p>	<p>The Flying Steps Academy is Germany’s biggest urban dance school. The visit will be a chance to hear about their programme and explore possibilities for exchange and collaboration on performing arts education (they would be interested in performing in Scotland and potentially in setting up a Scottish “sister school”).</p> <p>The visit will also be an opportunity to engage with Aurora Nova Director Wolfgang Hoffmann about his work presenting international artists at the Edinburgh Fringe, and to thank him for curating an Edinburgh Festival Fringe showcase last year in the main fanzone in Berlin during the Euros.</p>
<p>Supporting officials</p>	<p>Catherine Reeves [redacted - s38(1)(b)]</p>
<p>Briefing contents</p>	<p>Annex A: Background briefing</p>
<p>Media handling</p>	<p>See separate Comms plan</p>
<p>Social media</p>	<p>See separate Comms plan</p>

Background Briefing

Flying Steps Academy: background

The Flying Steps Urban Dance Academy was founded in 2007 by the internationally acclaimed breakdance crew Flying Steps, which originated in Berlin in 1993. After winning several world championships, and touring internationally with award-winning experimental productions like “Flying Bach” (which combines classical music with urban dance), the group established the Academy to train the next generation of dancers. Located in Berlin, it quickly became Germany’s largest urban dance school, offering over 20 dance styles (including hip hop, breakdance, house, and contemporary) taught by 75 instructors.

Today, the Academy spans 3 sites (in Kreuzberg, Reinickendorf and Steglitz), and offers 150 courses a week to more than 4000 children, in addition to training choreographers, dancers and producers in urban dance.

They would be interested in performing in and/or cooperating with Scottish dance schools, and potentially in setting up a Scottish “sister school”.

Dance and performing arts in Scotland: top lines

- The Scottish Government values the importance of the performing arts and the important contribution dancers, and their projects make to the cultural, social and economic life in communities across the Scotland and on the international stage.
- Creative Scotland, as the national development body for the arts, support 14 dance organisations in their Multi Year Funding (MYF) programming and will distribute over £9.5m across these organisations from 2025/26 to 2027/28 – including to Dance Base in Edinburgh and Indepen-Dance, the award winning inclusive dance company for disabled and non-disabled people in Glasgow.
- Dance Base is Scotland’s national centre for dance. They operate from purpose-built studios in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh running over 80 classes a week both online and in person including dance for health and wellbeing classes.
- Dance Base will receive a total of over £1.7m in multi year Scottish Government funding from 2025/26 to 2027/28, distributed by Creative Scotland
- The National Performing Companies are increasingly involved in health and wellbeing projects. Scottish Ballet has branded itself as the national centre for Dance Health, which is made up of pioneering multigenerational dance programmes that offer creative experiences to improve the health of those involved.

Dance education in Scotland: top lines

- Curriculum for Excellence recognises the value of the expressive arts and the important part they play in the curriculum.
- Dance is one of the four curriculum areas of Expressive Arts within Curriculum for Excellence.
- There is one Centre of Excellence delivering Dance education at Knightswood Secondary School.

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- Dance is being reviewed as part of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle into Expressive Arts.
- In order to meet demand in the growth of Dance, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland has just introduced a BA Dance Practice top-up degree programme.
- To deliver SQA Dance qualifications, teachers must demonstrate that teachers and lecturers have completed at least two years' successful study of dance to a minimum of Higher National Diploma (HND) level (SCQF level 8) or have extensive knowledge in dance, which can be supported by vocational and teaching qualifications through accredited dance awarding bodies.
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland offers a pathway for teachers to gain GTCS recognition in Dance through their MEd Learning and Teaching in the Arts. This course is also supported by Education Scotland.

Festivals – top lines

- Scotland has a wealth of outstanding festivals up and down the country. They are at the heart of our culture sector and national life.
- The biggest increase in culture funding in the history of this Parliament, ensures Scotland's festivals have received significant increases in core funding through Creative Scotland's Multi Year Funding programme. A third of all funding recipients run a festival and a number of those are receiving Multi Year Funding for the first time.
- We have also provided £4m of additional funding in the 2025/26 Budget to support our festivals.
- We have increased the Festivals EXPO Fund by £1 million, the first increase in 10 years, to support the work of the existing EXPO Fund cohort of 14 festivals in Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- We have also introduced an Expanded Festival Fund. This £1.8m fund, developed through the Strategic Partnership for Scotland's Festivals, delivers on a Scottish Budget 2025-26 commitment to expand the reach of the EXPO fund across Scotland, providing up to £200,000 in grants per festival in its first year to those not already in receipt of EXPO Funding.
- Audience to the August festivals in Edinburgh 2025 was over 3.2 million from nearly 100 countries with significant increases in new/first time attendees. On stage 83 countries participated together with 17 of them holding country showcases.
- Edinburgh's major Festivals collectively generate an economic impact of £367m for Scotland's economy, supporting almost 6,000 full time jobs and providing a return into the Scottish economy of £33 for every £1 invested from the public purse.
- More broadly across Scotland, our festivals continue to excel. Celtic Connections 2025 attracted audiences of 110,000, and Aberdeen Performing Arts' five annual festivals significantly contributed to the organisation's economic impact of over £46m to the local economy this year.

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Edinburgh Festival Fringe – German Showcase (2024)

- Performing Arts Made in Germany was the first official German showcase at the Fringe, curated by Kreativ-Transfer and the German Dance Association.
- Featuring performances at a variety of locations (Summerhall, Dance Base/Assembly, Zoo Southside, Underbelly Circus Hub), their programme of work included networking events and panels with Goethe-Institut Glasgow.
- Featured companies and productions included:
 - Sawdust Symphony – Michael Zandl, David Eisele, Kolja Huneck
 - PACK – Miller de Nobili
 - QUEENS – Anne Welenc
 - IIIII – The Art of Letting Go – Hanschitz & Beierer


Suggestions to make if Flying Steps raise the possibility of bringing work to Scotland

1. British Council would be the first port of call (direct to their office in Berlin in the first instance, SG Germany team can provide points of contact)
2. Creative Scotland link up and work in partnership in British Council and others on international partnership opportunities. The Cultural Bridge programme (see below) is a German specific example.
3. Germany Embassy/Consulate + Goethe-Institut, who are very supportive of bringing German artists, performers and cultural organisations to Scotland.

Cultural Bridge Programme - background

- Cultural Bridge celebrates bilateral partnerships between the UK and Germany through the collaboration between Arts Council England, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, British Council, Creative Scotland, Fonds Soziokultur, Goethe-Institut London and Wales Arts International / Arts Council of Wales.
- By funding partnerships between Germany and the UK, the programme aims to support a growing network of organisations committed to sharing expertise and skills, exchanging ideas and collaborating on artistic practices and projects that explore themes and issues faced by communities across both countries.
- Cultural Bridge has so far supported 49 partnerships through 62 awards, across four rounds of funding since its pilot year in 2021
- Recent partnerships (2025–26) include projects exploring dance and community engagement between UK and German organisations.
- Applications for the 2026/27 programme closed on 12 November 2025.

10. ST ANDREW'S DAY RECEPTION IN BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG LANDESVERTRETUNG

What	St Andrew's Day Reception at Baden-Württemberg Landesvertretung	
Where	Tiergartenstr. 15, 11056 Berlin	
When	Friday 28 th November from 18:00 – 21:30	
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Andrew's Day has a special significance in Scotland, and it is a pleasure to celebrate it with Scots and friends of Scotland in Berlin • Delighted to celebrate St Andrew's Day in the BW Landesvertretung, as an opportunity to mark the strong partnership between Scotland and Baden-Württemberg since the signing of the joint 2022 MOU • This has been a particularly active year for the Scotland-Baden-Württemberg partnership. • Since this time last year, we have seen the visit of BW Science and Research Minister Petra Olschowski to Scotland with a large delegation; continued strong cooperation with BW on climate via the Under2 Coalition; and three Scottish delegations to Baden-Württemberg on the topics of hydrogen, carbon capture and storage, and space. • We will seek to build on that collaboration next year: the opportunities for joint working on space, in particular, are immense. 	
Who		<p>Staatssekretär Rudi Hoogvliet, Bevollmächtigter des Landes beim Bund was born in the Netherlands in 1958 and has been the head of the BW Landesvertretung since 2021. He was previously Minister-Präsident Winfried Kretschmann's spokesman and head of the BW regional government's press department. Following a short pre-meeting with Cab Sec CEAC on arrival, he will open the evening with some introductory words ahead of the keynote.</p>
Why	An opportunity to celebrate the Scotland-Baden-Württemberg partnership, project Scottish values and traditions, and consolidate relationships with contacts who have helped us advance Scottish interests in Germany over the year	
Supporting officials	[redacted - s38(1)(b)] Catherine Reeves [redacted - s38(1)(b)]	
Briefing contents	Annex A: Programme Annex B: Biographies of VIP attendees and priority networking targets Annex C: Speech (separate attachment) Annex D: Full guest list (separate attachment)	

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Media handling	See separate Comms plan
Social media	See separate Comms plan

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ANNEX A – PROGRAMME

18.00	Doors open, piper welcomes guests, drinks served. In parallel: Cab Sec pre-meet with Head of the Baden-Württemberg Landesvertretung Staatssekretär Rudi Hoogvliet, with exchange of gifts.
18.30-18.55	Speeches: 18.30-35: Welcome from Staatssekretär Rudi Hoogvliet (Baden-Württemberg Landesvertretung) 18:35-18.36 Welcome from Catherine Reeves, Head of the SG Germany Office, introducing Cab Sec CEAC 18.36-18.45: Cab Sec CEAC keynote (Part 1) 18.45-18.50: Space showcase: Cab Sec plays a video message from Scottish astronaut David Mackay and Scottish ministerial envoy for space Daniel Smith 18.50-55: Cab Sec CEAC keynote (Part 2): Cab Sec reflects on the message, gives special thanks to Baden-Württemberg International, offers other votes of thanks, opens event
18.55 onwards	Networking with BW-style catering, whisky tasting, “Kids’ corner” and Scottish stands/displays (foregrounding lifestyle, space and Scottish Connections as well as Baden-Württemberg International)
20.00-20.30	Onstage performance from the Firelight Trio (ending with 2-3 sample ceilidh dances, which the band will “call”)
20.30 onwards	Cab Sec CEAC free to leave if desired
22.00	Band plays “Auld Lang Syne”. Event ends.

ANNEX B – BIOGRAPHIES OF VIP ATTENDEES AND PRIORITY NETWORKING TARGETS

SG Germany office will prioritise introducing these contacts to Cab Sec CEAC over the course of the evening



Maurice Lange, known by his alias "Mori," is a successful German content creator with around 65,000 subscribers on YouTube and 53,000 followers on Twitch. He moved from a long career in the gaming industry into a focus on cooking, and is now the personality behind the popular YouTube channel "Mori Cooks."

Mori worked with the SG Germany Office and VisitScotland at Grüne Woche 2025 (a major B2C food and drink expo held in the Berlin Messegelände), to showcase Scottish food and drink with a livestreamed cook-in and "in conversation" event. This was a success, and he and his communications agency Factory-C have invited the Scotland team back to create another expanded showcase (focusing on Scotland's vegetarian and vegan offer, with a cultural element) in January 2026 for the 100th anniversary edition of Grüne Woche.



Jacob Sweetman is the lead for English-language communications at 1. FC Union Berlin, where he manages international outreach through social media, match reports, and video content. A long-time Union fan, he moved to Berlin in 2007 and has been deeply involved in the city's football culture ever since, previously editing the fanzine *No Dice Magazine*.

Sweetman has played a key role in connecting Union with its growing global fan base, organizing international community events and providing English language coverage for the club's historic milestones, including the women's team's promotion to the Frauen-Bundesliga. Beyond his work at Union, he is also known as a writer and commentator on football's cultural and political dimensions, contributing to projects like *Homegames*, an essay collection on European football culture.

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Joachim Bartz is a seasoned investigative journalist and editor at ZDF, working primarily for the political magazine Frontal (formerly *Frontal21*). He is known for in-depth reporting on international security, espionage, and geopolitical conflicts. Bartz has co-authored high-profile documentaries such as “*Putins geheimes Netzwerk – Wie Russland den Westen spaltet*” and recent investigations into the Wirecard scandal and Jan Marsalek’s alleged ties to Russian intelligence. His work often exposes covert operations, disinformation campaigns, and power structures behind global crises, earning him recognition

including a nomination for the German Television Award for Best Documentary in 2017.



Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Tietmeyer is an ethnologist and has been Director of the Museum of European Cultures (MEK) in Berlin since 2013.

She studied ethnology, European ethnology, and sociology at the University of Münster and earned her doctorate with research on marriage systems in Kenya. After joining the Museum für Völkerkunde in 1993, she played a key role in establishing the MEK and has focused on material culture, migration, diversity, and intercultural exchange.

Under her leadership, the museum has developed numerous international collaborations, including the summer 2022 exhibition “Document Scotland: Views from a Changing Country”, created in partnership with the Scottish Government Office in Berlin. This exhibition, which formed the centrepiece of the 18th European Cultural Days at MEK, showcased Scotland beyond the clichés of bagpipes, kilts and whisky, presenting a nuanced view of a nation in transition. Tietmeyer also serves on professional committees such as the German UNESCO Commission and ICOM.



Rachel Loxton is an award-winning journalist from Aberdeen, Scotland who has been based in Berlin since 2017.

With over 15 years’ experience, she began her career at Scottish newspapers before moving to Germany. Loxton spent several years as an editor at The Local Germany, where she launched the *Germany in Focus* podcast. She has contributed to international outlets such as Deutsche Welle, *Die Welt*, and *The Irish Times*, and runs the newsletter Kaffee+Kuchen, focusing on culture, creativity, and expat life.

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Robert Seehawer is the CEO of the German offshore wind-to-hydrogen consortium Aquaventus, which aims to develop and promote large-scale green hydrogen production at sea. This includes building the AquaDuctus pipeline to transport hydrogen from the edge of the German Exclusive Economic Zone to mainland Germany (with opportunities for North Sea neighbours, including Scotland and the UK, to link into the pipeline).

Net Zero Technology Centre research indicates that it would be technically feasible to adapt the proposed Hydrogen Backbone link to feed into the AquaDuctus pipeline and that a tie-in with AquaDuctus could reduce the costs of a link from the UK to Germany by 30%. Gascade, the company leading the AquaDuctus project, this year signed an MOU with National Gas in the UK with a view to joint exploration of the feasibility of a pipeline interconnector.



Tim Evison is Senior Vice President – Clean Hydrogen and Sustainability at Messer SE, the Germany-based firm which has the distinction of being the world's largest family-run specialist in industrial gases. Tim is responsible for the development of Messer's clean hydrogen business and the decarbonisation of its activities. Originally introduced to the SG Germany Office by David Scrimgeour, he took part in the recent SG hydrogen and derivatives mission Germany, meeting the delegates in Düsseldorf; we understand that he had particularly promising

conversations with Veri Energy about their hydrogen and derivatives production plans.



Olga Hochweis is a cultural journalist and presenter at Deutschlandfunk Kultur (Germany's national cultural radio). She produces and hosts programs focusing on literature, music, and cultural politics. Her work includes book reviews, interviews, and in-depth features for shows such as "Lesart" and "Büchermarkt", presenting international literature and exploring societal issues.

Hochweis specializes in European and global cultural relations and has contributed to numerous projects, including broadcasts on the Caucasus, Eastern European literature, and contemporary music. She also moderated podcasts such as the special for the 40th anniversary of the Archive of Women and Music and regularly interviews authors, composers, and artists. In addition to her radio work, she publishes cultural journalism in various media outlets.

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Dr Mhairi Stewart is the Deputy Head of Public Engagement and Impact at the Museum für Naturkunde, taking up her post in May 2023.

Before moving to Berlin, she was the Head of Public Engagement at the University of St Andrews in Scotland from 2016 to 2022, and also worked at the University of Glasgow. Her academic background is in tropical medicine.

Other key contacts to speak with in the course of the evening include **Ilka Hartmann**, **Dr Franziska Hagedorn**, **Dr Sigrid Rieuwerts** (who is attending with her guests from the University of Glasgow **Dr Kirsteen McCue** and **Professor Lorna Hughes**) and **Mari Mittelhaus**, all of whom Cab Sec CEAC already knows.

ANNEX 1 : SWITZERLAND COUNTRY BRIEF

Head of State – Federal Council (collective head of state)

President of the Confederation – Karin Keller-Sutter (FDP The Liberals – centre-right)

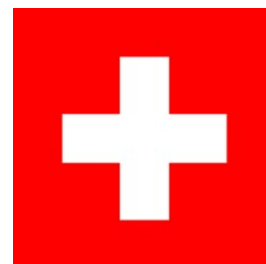
Government – Federal Council (4 parties). Much power lies at the cantonal level (26 cantons)

Foreign Minister – Ignazio Cassis (FDP The Liberals)

Ambassador to UK – Dominique Paravicini (since Sep 2025)

UK Ambassador – James Squire (since March 2022)

Residents in Scotland – 1,000 (2021 ONS estimate)



Internal country politics

On 1 January 2025, Finance Minister Karin Keller-Sutter was elected President of the Swiss Confederation for the year. Considered as the most influential Federal Councillor, it will be the first time she has held the rotating presidency. Guy Parmelin was elected Vice-President and will succeed Keller-Sutter in 2026. Federal Councillor Viola Amherd announced her intention to step down from government on 31 March. As the first woman to serve as Defence Minister, Amherd will be remembered for being a strong voice in support of Ukraine, increased defence spending and promoting debate on the future of Swiss neutrality and security policy. Her successor, Martin Pfister from the centre-right party 'The Centre', was elected on Parliament on 12 March.

Switzerland's political agenda in 2025 is dominated by the newly concluded framework agreement with the European Union. The government faces domestic scrutiny as it works to defend and implement the deal, which aims to stabilise bilateral relations and enhance cooperation across trade, research, and mobility. In December 2024, negotiations for the framework agreement were concluded, including agreement on Swiss contributions to cohesion funds and freedom of movement. There is satisfaction in Bern that negotiators have secured protection of the fundamentals; opening the way to developing cooperation, including rejoining Horizon, after more than three years in the deep freeze. But the domestic political context remains fraught and securing approval will be lengthy. Although many Swiss see a deal with the EU as a strategic necessity, many equally see its consistent economic outperformance of EU neighbours and wonder how much they would have to lose from a gradual erosion of ties.

Switzerland has been subject to 39% tariffs on goods to the US market since 1 August 2025 and despite positive negotiations, these challenging tariffs remain.

UKG and Switzerland will soon enter their 6th round of trade negotiations to modernise the existing UK/Switzerland FTA, with an intention of reflecting e.g. digital trade and trade in services as a result of the Berne Financial Services Agreement. This will inevitably have implications and create opportunities for Scotland. Mobility being included in trade negotiations is a key demand for the Swiss, who want to ensure that requirements for short-term movement for those with technical expertise are eased.

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Key links

- Switzerland is the number 5 priority country in *A Trading Nation*.
- SDI has two members of staff working in the Bern Embassy, and a very strong network of 36 GlobalScots in Switzerland, across a number of sectors including life sciences, chemicals, fintech, technology, engineering, creative industries and food and drink.

Recent and upcoming ministerial engagement

- **26-27 Nov 2025** – **Mr Robertson** to visit Bern for St Andrew's Day
- **28 Oct 2025** – **Mr Robertson** met Ambassador Paravicini in Edinburgh
- **20 Feb 2025** – **DFM** and **Mr Robertson** met Ambassador Leitner in Edinburgh

ANNEX 2 : GERMANY COUNTRY BRIEF

Head of State – President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD)

Chancellor – Friedrich Merz (CDU)

Ambassador to UK – Susanne Baumann (since Sep 2025)

Consul General in Edinburgh – Christiane Hullmann (since Aug 2023)

UK Ambassador – Andrew Mitchell (since Sep 2024)

Residents in Scotland – 22,000 (2022 ONS estimate)

Population (2025) - 84.1m

GDP (2024) - \$4.591 trillion (3rd largest)

GDP per capita (2024) - \$54,291 (16th largest)



Germany is one of Scotland’s closest partners, with strong economic, educational and people-to-people links. The country ranked as our 3rd largest export destination in 2021, with exports worth £2.45 billion (excluding oil & gas). In terms of FDI, there were 200 German-owned businesses in Scotland, employing 20,520 people, with a total reported turnover of £7.34 billion (as of November 2024). From 2030 onwards, we hope to see Germany increasingly becoming a major customer for the **Scottish energy offer** (notably **green hydrogen** and **CCUS storage capacity**, with interim opportunities in the **wind energy** and **geothermal skills and supply chain**), as well as increasing **trade, investment and research cooperation** in other high-performing Scottish sectors like **small satellites, AI and life sciences**.

Despite the challenges posed by Brexit, in 2022/23, Germany was the second highest country (after Ireland) for EU student enrolments in Scotland, with 1,495 German domiciled university students in Scotland. Scottish universities including Edinburgh and St Andrews maintain active alumni diaspora networks in Germany. Scotland’s “affinity diaspora” in Germany is also strong, with widespread appreciation at a population level for Scottish culture, food and drink. In 2023, Scotland welcomed 343,000 visits from Germany in first 9 months of last year: there are predicted boosts to visitor numbers in 2024-25 as a result of the “Euros effect”, which saw some 200,000 Scottish football fans visit Germany for the 2024 Euros, raising Scotland’s profile and creating great goodwill with their German hosts.

Politics

- [redacted - 30(b)(i)] Friedrich Merz was appointed as the new German Chancellor in May 2025, just over 10 weeks after his party’s success in the federal elections of 23 February. Merz will lead a “Grand Coalition” of the conservative-affiliated CDU, their Bavarian sister party the CSU, and the Labour-affiliated SPD.
- Under the title “Responsibility for Germany”, the new coalition partners’ programme commits to governing explicitly as “parties of the centre”, with a focus on a strong labour market, economic growth, amplified defence capability, stronger migration controls, and wide-reaching buildout of digitalisation and infrastructure, supported by the new special infrastructure fund mentioned above
- Germany is projecting that 2025 will be its third year of economic stagnation – the first time in its postwar history that there has been such a prolonged period without growth. The Trump tariffs have felt particularly existential to Germans, for whom the USA was their country’s biggest trading partner in 2024, with a trade

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surplus of €70 billion last year leaving Germany particularly exposed to the threat of a US-EU trade war.

- The relaxation of the fiscally restrictive debt brake in January, and Merz-brokered parliamentary agreement to new borrowing of €500 billion for spending on infrastructure, injected optimism into Germany's financial markets, with the DAX index shooting up in response to what Deutsche Bank described as a "historic paradigm shift".

Economy, Trade & Investment

Germany is Scotland's third largest export partner, and closely linked to us in terms of Foreign Direct Investment. Scotland's strengths in areas of particular economic interest to Germany present opportunities to foster closer economic ties.

Notably, the new government's focus on achieving an affordable, secure energy supply while meeting climate targets present opportunities for Scottish companies to service the large and growing German demand for energy and decarbonisation, including via offshore wind, geothermal and carbon capture and storage, which has just been legalised in Germany. There remain opportunities in hydrogen [redacted - 30(b)(i)]

Scotland is also increasingly recognised in Germany as a leading player in the space industry: the first rocket launch from Scottish soil, expected in 2026, will provide the final piece in Scotland's end-to-end space supply chain capability, and a high-profile demonstration of our space offer to the German market. And in the wake of the 2024 Euros, the already strong German market for Scottish tourism (with side benefits to Scottish food and drink) has received an additional boost.

There are 34 GlobalScots based across Germany, spanning a wide range of sectors including energy, food and drink, technology, creative industries, fintech, life sciences and aerospace. The majority are based in Baden-Württemberg (4), Berlin (6), Bavaria (9) and North Rhine-Westphalia (9), whilst Bremen (1), Hamburg (1), Hesse (1), Lower Saxony (1), Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (1) and Schleswig-Holstein (1) are also represented.

Länder relations

Scotland has five regional MoU agreements: Bavaria (2017), Baden-Württemberg (BW) (2022), Hamburg (2021) NRW (2022) and Rhineland-Palatinate (RLP) (2021).

The agreement with BW focuses on promoting co-operation on climate and energy. We have hydrogen agreements with Hamburg and Bavaria, and strong working-level hydrogen cooperation with Lower Saxony and the wider north Germany Hy-5 region, as well as NRW. Our agreement with RLP is focussed on culture, education, higher education and research, while our agreement with NRW also has a strong economic and energy focus.

Upcoming engagement

- **27 Nov 2025 – Mr Macpherson** to address RSE Scotland-Lower Saxony Joint Forum in Edinburgh
- **27-28 Nov 2025 – Mr Robertson** to visit Berlin for St Andrew's Day

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Recent engagement

- **13 Nov 2025 – Mr Robertson** and **Director DCEA** met AA Inspector General in Edinburgh
- **11 Nov 2025 – Mr Robertson** participated in BGA event on Germany and multi-level governance
- **10 Nov 2025 – Director DCEA** delivered speech at German Consulate WWII exhibition in Edinburgh alongside Ambassador Baumann
- **24 Oct 2025 – Ms Martin** met Green Member of the Bundestag Katrin Uhlig in Aberdeen
- **13-17 Oct 2025 –** Space trade delegation visit to Germany (Bavaria, BW, Bremen)
- **21-24 Oct 2025 –** CCUS trade delegation visit to Germany (Hamburg, NRW, BW)
- **4-7 Oct 2025 – Ms Gougeon** visited Cologne for Anuga trade fair
- **1 Oct 2025 – Mr Robertson** delivered keynote address at annual Consulate German Unity Day reception in Edinburgh
- **24 Sept 2025 –** Visit to Scotland by Lower Saxony Landtag Petitions Committee, including meeting with **Mr Robertson**
- **18- 19 Sept 2025 – Mr Robertson** visited Berlin to deliver speech on energy to CDU Economic Council think tank
- **17 – 19 Sept 2025 -** Visit to Scotland by RLP Minister for Science & Health Clemens Hoch, including meeting with **Mr Gray** and engagement with **Ms Minto** at panel discussion on AI and healthcare.
- **15-19 Sept 2025 –** Hydrogen trade delegation visit to Germany (BW, NRW, Hamburg)
- **3-5 Sept 2025 –** Bavarian CSU delegation visited Scotland, including meeting with **Mr Robertson and Mr Fairlie**
- **3 July 2025 – Chief Economist** met Hesse Budget Committee in Edinburgh
- **4-5 May 2025 - Chief Economist** participated in Global Solutions Summit in Berlin as judge for Global Young Changers programme
- **28 Apr 2025 – Mr Robertson** met UK Director of the CSU-affiliated Hanns Seidel Stiftung in Edinburgh
- **2-3 Apr 2025 – Ms Stewart** attended Global Disability Summit in Berlin
- **1 Apr 2025 –** Visit to Scotland by Lower Saxony Science & Culture Committee, who met **Mr Dey** and **Mr Roberson**
- **28 Mar 2025 –** Visit to Scotland by Bavarian Minister for European and International Affairs Eric Beisswenger, meeting with **Mr Robertson**
- **18 – 20 Mar 2025 – Ms Martin** attended Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue
- **21-23 Jan 2025 - Ms Martin** attended Handelsblatt Energy Summit in Berlin