

Item 3

29th May 2025



Glasgow City Council

Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities, Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee

Report by Director of Communication and Corporate Governance

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EUROPEAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to update Committee on European engagement considering existing connections and future opportunities e.g., Twin Cities and networks, and European related Events – 2024 / 2025

Recommendations:

To note the City's European ongoing engagement and activity

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☒ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Glasgow is a proudly European city. We remain European by heritage and by design and continue to be a welcoming and inclusive home for all our European and international residents, students, visitors and communities. As a globally minded city, we are committed to working with our European peer cities and partners on collaborative endeavours that support our values and Glasgow's Grand Challenges. This was reconfirmed in a '[European Youth Mobility](#)' motion at Full Council 16 May 2024 last year.
- 1.2 Despite the barriers of Brexit and other global events resulting in shifting geopolitical, technological and corporate dynamics, Glasgow continues to distinguish itself in attractiveness for foreign direct investment. fDi Intelligence, an investment insights provider that's part of the Financial Times group, in its [2025 report places Glasgow in the Top Three large European cities for strategy in attracting overseas investment](#) due to the city's approach to innovation" which "has been forged in partnerships between academia, industry, government and local communities."
- 1.3 This is a recognition of the impact of the City Government's economic policies, which have transformed Glasgow's approach to inward investment and put us in the top rank of European cities to attract high quality jobs and generate growth all our citizens can share in.
- 1.4 Glasgow continues to garner European accolades. Last month world-leading consultants Resonance again recognised what's great about our great city. After ranking us 61st in the world's best cities, last month they named Glasgow the 28th best in Europe. Resonance is used to inform major global investment decisions and uses robust metrics to measure us against competitors. Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham are once again in Glasgow's shadow.
- 1.5 The Council has been engaging with its European partners through different collaborative channels and partnerships to continue maximising opportunities for the city;
 - Twinning Programme
 - Eurocities and other networks
 - European Citizens Forum
 - European Parliament Liaison Office & Delegation of the European Union to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

This report builds on the [previous report to Committee on 30 May 2024](#).

2 International Strategy

- 2.1 [Glasgow's International Strategy 2025-2030](#) was launched last year: it aims to improve and enhance Glasgow's growth, resilience and sustainability. Working

to promote global trade, foreign direct investment and strategic partnerships. Glasgow attracts businesses, talent, and capital that drives development and innovation.

- 2.2 Agreed in November 2024 at CAC after a period of engagement with key stakeholders (including more than 100 local businesses), it re-iterated the significance of the EU as a market, source of inward investment, and place where cultural, civic and educational links are at their strongest for Glasgow. The strategy also recognises the importance of participation in the Eurocities network in achieving these strategic goals.

3 Twin Cities

- 3.1 Glasgow has a long standing engagement with other European cities. The Lord Provost and International Office engage with its European partners through its Twinning Programme; Glasgow is twinned with the European cities of Turin, Italy; Nuremberg, Germany, Marseilles, France. More recently, Glasgow signed a twinning agreement with Mykolaiv, Ukraine.
- 3.2 Through our Twin Cities projects, we have strengthened Glasgow's ties with our European neighbours, encouraging knowledge and experience exchange, collaboration and friendship.
- 3.3 For this year's Europe Day the Lord Provost hosted a civic reception for European community groups and other organisations and stakeholders invested in our connections. The theme was *Youth, Unity and Friendship*. Keynote speakers were Drs Kate Botterill and Bozena Sojka, University of Glasgow who presented on their [three-year research project](#) in partnership with the University of Strathclyde and University of St Andrews, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), examining life after migration for young Europeans in post-Brexit Britain. The project, which surveyed over 1,500 young Europeans aged 16-26, and tracks their experiences navigating education, employment and citizenship in the UK.
- 3.4 A component of the research is a podcast, called 'I'm Migrant', features stories from young Europeans based in Glasgow who migrated to Scotland either as children or as adults. The young people from Poland, Croatia, Ukraine and Georgia were given complete creative control over content and direction.
- 3.5 The podcast gives voice to the everyday experiences behind the politics of migration, with contributions from young people who have lived through very different experiences of coming to the UK and making a life here, from EU citizens who came as children to those arriving for work or seeking sanctuary. These voices were brought to life by an in-person panel discussion at the Europe Day event, the audience hearing directly from young people, who have grown up in Glasgow schools and call Glasgow home while maintaining connections and challenging stereotypes, exploring the lived reality of migration

- 3.6 As part of Glasgow 850 Celebrations, Glasgow's Twin Cities have been invited to participate in a Celebration of Twinning Programme – *Unity & Friendship* from 8-11 June. 2025 marks the 40 year anniversary of Glasgow's Twinning with Nuremberg in Germany, marked by a number of key projects and partnerships.
- 3.7 Glasgow is constantly developing and supporting cohesion programmes via arts, education, health and wellbeing, sports and knowledge exchange, and is consistently exploring new opportunities for cooperation.

4 Eurocities

- 4.1 Glasgow engages in a range of global networks. Many of these have European aspects to these. Participation within these networks often strengthens bilateral collaboration with our twin cities
- 4.2 Eurocities is the largest network of European Cities with populations in excess of 250,000. Member cities come from 30 different countries. It provides a platform for cooperation on matters of urban interest and serves as a lobby for cities' interests vis-à-vis the European institutions. Its main activities are exchange of expertise, policy development and lobbying at an EU level as the voice of those cities and urban policy makers. Membership is a Council policy, in that the Eurocities representative is a formal Council appointment to an outside body. Bailie Annette Christie is the Council's appointed representative.
- 4.3 Eurocities is governed by an Executive Committee consisting of 12 member cities elected by the wider membership. 'ExCom' provides a political and organisational steer to the network in dialogue with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of six thematic forums. Glasgow was selected the Chair of the Social Affairs Forum in summer 2023, its two year term comes to an end next month at the network AGM.
- 4.4 Glasgow is active across the fora whether in associated working groups or taskforces that align with Council priorities. Following the 2024 European Union elections and the appointment of new Commissioners, the Eurocities network formed a Shadow Commission. Bailie Christie was selected as Shadow Commissioner for Women's Rights and Equalities The following activities provide an insight into a range of activities that support our strategic priorities.

Women's Rights & Equalities

- 4.5 Chaired by Vienna, the need for the Eurocities Taskforce on Gender Equality, is led in partnership with Glasgow and Nantes who serve as joint Vice Chairs. Glasgow was selected to lead due to its track record in championing young women and girls. The taskforce aims to influence the internal work of the network and inform its external influencing and advocacy work. Its work has influenced the European Commission's 'Roadmap for Women's Rights' published earlier this year.

- 4.6 Complementing the work of the Taskforce, the network also created a Shadow Commission to inform the work of the newly appointed European Commissioners. Bailie Christie met with the new intake of MEPs and other Commissioners in her role as the Eurocities Shadow Commissioner for Women's Rights at the European Mayors Summit in October 2024.
- 4.7 This year the Lord Provost participated in the Eurocities Women City Leaders Mentoring Programme providing guidance and support to a deputy mayor from Nantes. This led to attending Gender Task Force meeting in Nantes where the Lord Provost presented on the Carter Initiative work – Inform Women/ Transform Lives. Working with a cohort of European and International Cities on the common purpose of empowering women, Glasgow has worked collaboratively with a series of committed stakeholders alongside young women across the city keen to inform, shape and take ownership of their campaign. – Sophie's Stop. The campaign was showcased to a European audience in a knowledge exchange as has served as an opportunity for the Carter Center to establish links with and potentially work with other European cities.
- 4.8 As a result of this work, the Lord Provost was invited to speak at The Council of Europe in Strasbourg on her work tackling gender-based violence, and her experience as a female politician and the Mentoring Programme.

Youth & Education

- 4.9 As highlighted in the successful May 2024 motion re European Youth Mobility, mitigating the negative impact of Brexit on young people's mobility and international connections has been a Council priority. Last October Education Services officially launched its international Education Strategy during a visit to Glasgow by the when the Director of the European Parliament Liaison Office.
- 4.10 The visit involved meeting with the Councillor Christina Cannon, City Convenor for Education & Skills and the Executive Director of Education to learn about our education system including language teaching and Gaelic Medium Education.
- 4.11 Cleveden Secondary School, presented on being the first Glasgow school to participate in the European Parliament Ambassador Schools Programme, and how they have engaged and explored how they can continue to forge European connections. Pupils from Cleveden shared the knowledge they had gained, and teachers promoted this programme to other secondary schools in Glasgow.
- 4.12 Over the past 5 years our schools have been involved in the Euroquiz programme. Euroquiz is an annual project ran by SCILT, Scotland's SCILT is the national centre for languages. SCILT works alongside Local Authorities and schools by providing teachers with the guidance and resources to support the development of confident language learners.
- 4.13 Open to all P6 pupils across Scotland, teams of four work together to broaden their knowledge of Europe and the wider world. Euroquiz creates an

enthusiasm for learning, developing pupils' ability to work in teams and communicate effectively, ultimately increasing their confidence and range of core skills. . Subjects covered include languages, history, geography, culture and European affairs.

- 4.14 This year we had our highest ever number of Primary Schools taking part – 24. Heats take place in local authorities from February to March, with the winning teams from all areas progressing to the National Euroquiz Final in June. Kelvinside Primary will be representing GCC at the Final in Edinburgh on the 9th of June.
- 4.15 Our educational staff also continue to profit from European connections. In the past years we have hosted visits from Iceland and the Netherlands and jointly with the city of Milan we chair the Eurocities Working Group on Children & Young People. We have shared our approach to tackling child poverty and benefitted from a knowledge exchange with Gothenburg on the same subject. Most recently the Quality Improvement Officer for International Education is participating in the ENRED project sharing best practice on educational internationalisation with other educational experts from Spain, France, Turkey and Italy.

Culture

- 4.16 Glasgow is active in the Eurocities Cultural Forum and all its working groups. In September we hosted the Working Group on Art in Public Spaces. As well as a peer review of our redevelopment of George Square, visitors from Munich to Tallinn enjoyed a site visit to see the Beithier at Stockingfield Bridge and met wider cultural practitioners at the Glasgow Sculpture Studio from a variety of organisations like SWG3.
- 4.17 In [summer 2024, we hosted the European Heritage Hub](#), an EU-funded pilot project run by a consortium of 20 partners led by Europa Nostra, with Europeana Foundation, the Eurocities network and others. 25 Heritage experts from across Europe – from Georgia to Madeira visited Glasgow which was competitively selected as one of 10 European cities for being Cultural Leaders in Action.
- 4.18 We shared our innovation in social, digital and environmental heritage related activities as part of the £36m Burrell Refurbishment. Visitors also learned about the Pollok Country Stables and Sawmill £15.5 million three-year refurbishment project, and plans for the redesign and refurbishment of the Peoples Place and Winter Gardens. We ensured that a civic reception was a key part of this open to wider city heritage and cultural leaders creating an opportunity for connections to be made, ideas exchanged, project proposals discussed, and hopefully funded partnerships developed.
- 4.19 Following the visit, based on Glasgow's track record on preserving built heritage and innovation on the green, digital and social agendas, the City Convenor for Culture, Sport and International Relations was asked to be a speaker at the Europa Nostra annual summit in Bucharest. As well as the award winning Burrell

Collection, refurbishment of the People's Palace and Sauchiehall Street Cultural and Heritage District development.

- 4.20 She also spoke on the ambitious new £5.6 million project to develop Virtual Reality museums. Glasgow University's 'Museums in the Metaverse' is one of eleven Glasgow Innovation Accelerator projects which share of £100 million to further accelerate the Region's booming innovation economy. The event was used to promote the innovation in our city and highlight that Glasgow is still open for cultural and heritage knowledge exchanges and business

Food Systems & Food Justice

- 4.21 The Council and the city's Food Plan has benefited throughout its development from the advice, support and of European expertise since the city's first Food Summit in 2019, when Milan provided a keynote address. Through the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and participation in the Eurocities Working Group on Food we have been able to benchmark ourselves and participate in knowledge exchanges. Copenhagen provided a keynote speaker in our second Food Summit in 2023 congratulating Glasgow's inspiring approach and track record working with communities.
- 4.22 We were matched with Groningen as part of the Horizon Europe Food Trails project to co-create a holistic approach to food systems, and aspiration to deliver a streamlined and comprehensive offer and gateway to residents, communities and stakeholders from everything from food growing to reducing food waste.
- 4.23 Since the last Committee report we have been successful in securing another Horizon Europe project through the Eurocities network, CleverFoods aims to engage European citizens—ranging from youth and children to farmers, investors, researchers, and policymakers—in the transformation of Europe's food system. By fostering a more fair, healthy, circular, and plant-based approach, it further aims to bring cities across Europe in a unified effort toward achieving a sustainable and resilient food system
- 4.24 We are benefitting from mentoring from Milan regarding its expertise in developing urban and rural connections, food production and strategic use of procurement. We are involved in a Living Lab with Hamburg, Cagliari & Charleroi sharing our knowledge on food aid for vulnerable groups, working with community groups and stakeholder engagement. Lab partners are also being linked in with the Taste the Place Glasgow 850 initiative led by the Chamber of Commerce.

Climate and Sustainability

- 4.25 We have successfully secured participation in the Eurocities brokered Horizon Europe funded GOLIA project alongside the three core cities of Antwerp, Florence and Pilzen to support the development of policies and governance shaping future transport and mobility systems.

- 4.26 We have also been successful in joining another Horizon-funded project called [GreenDEMO](#), which aims to create 'greener' democracies, support collaboration on local green deals, and achieve sustainability goals. This links well to our membership and participation in the Open Government Partnership.

5 EU Citizens Forum and communities

- 5.1 The EU Citizens Forum continues its key work in engagement with EU citizens living in Glasgow. The Forum's aim is to support citizens of EU countries working and living in Glasgow and contributing to its economic, cultural and social life.
- 5.2 Many of the members attended this year's Europe Day event hosted by the Lord Provost's Office which provided a networking opportunity to discuss key issues around youth, migration and Glasgow's standing in Europe. Bailie Annette Christie provided an extensive presentation on Glasgow's proactive and positive approach to engaging with our European counterparts through our partnerships and network memberships via Eurocities and beyond.
- 5.3 Forum members and community representatives have been involved in Glasgow 850 celebrations. In partnership with the Irish Consulate, we celebrated St Brigid's Day this year highlighting the contribution and connections of Irish women to our city. Speakers included women from the Donegal County Archives, Glasgow Life Archives and two Glasgow artists Rachael Flynn and Christina McBride.
- 5.4 This followed the Council hosting a Donegal County Council heritage project in October 2024 focusing on documenting the working lives of Donegal emigrants in Scotland. Over 200 Glaswegians attended sharing the story of their family's links. Glasgow Life Museums are in discussion with Donegal County Council about hosting the resulting 'Working Over By' exhibition once it concludes in Letterkenny in October this year. The work complements the award from our 850 festival fund for an Irish Roots project by the Govanhill Baths Community Trust.
- 5.5 Other future plans involve celebrating national days with the Italian and Polish communities and celebrating 730 years since the Auld Alliance Treaty in partnership with the French Consulate.

6 European Union institutions

- 6.1 As noted, we continue to work with the European Parliament Liaison Office, creating opportunities to maintain connections with our European citizens estimated to be 16% of our residents, a focus being youth.
- 6.2 As well as the City Convenor for Culture, Sport and International Relations meeting new MEPs, she was also invited to speak at a conference 'Culture:

the Compass for Europe's Future' in early February 2025 in Brussels. Bailie Christie was a panellist alongside the new European Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport, Glen Micallef. She spoke on our new culture strategy, Glasgow Life's ongoing engagement with European peers and the cultural community, and our ongoing commitment to our European residents and celebrating their connections and contributions to our city.

5 Next steps

- 6.1 Ongoing engagement remains a priority with European twin cities and peers, participation in networks like Eurocities is vital to the flourishing of our city and its prosperity both economically and culturally. Continuing to welcome and value and European citizens and others underpins this.
- 6.2 Continue to promote and work alongside Glasgow's international strategy and its priorities for the city in connecting with Europe and the rest of the world. The strategy looks to do three main things. Acknowledge Glasgow's role as a place that connects in various ways and builds on those links so that Glaswegian businesses and communities can benefit from them.

7 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: Twin city participation has been covered by the Lord Provost and International Office budget and others by various European funds

Legal: None

Personnel: Council Officers

Procurement: N/A

Council Strategic Plan: Specify which Grand Challenge (s) and Mission (s) the proposal supports. Where appropriate the relevant Commitment can also be listed.

Our European engagement supports the achievement of all four Grand Challenges:

1. Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities.
2. Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens.
3. Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow.

4. Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.

As Chair of the Social Affairs Forum our participation in the Eurocities network is founded on an equalities approach. Our support in establishing the EU Citizens Forum ensures we are enabled even further to support the Council's Equality Outcomes:

- Outcome 3 (access to services)
- Outcome 5 (report hate crime)
- Outcome 7 (diverse and inclusive workplace)
- Outcome 8 (increased representation)
- Outcome 12 (delivering equality and diversity curriculum)
- Outcome 13 (challenging discrimination)

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

As detailed in the report we are invested in continuing to secure a positive impact for European citizens and through our engagement wider benefits to others.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

Our European engagement ensures access to and leverage in securing European funding.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

Glasgow is a member of EU Mission 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities. Through this multiple actions are taken forward

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

As above

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

As above

**Privacy and Data
Protection Impacts:** N

Are there any potential
data protection impacts
as a result of this report
Y/N

If Yes, please confirm that
a Data Protection Impact
Assessment (DPIA) has
been carried out

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the City's ongoing European engagement and activity