



Glasgow City Council

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

**Report by Colin Edgar, 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 the successful 'Europe Day motion' 11 May 2023.

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 ['Europe Day' motion](#) last year.
- 1.2 Exports to the EU are estimated to directly support 130,000 jobs in Scotland, with 20,000 of those in Glasgow and another 20,000 in the greater Glasgow region. Of Scotland's 10 major export destinations, six are in the EU, plus Norway and Switzerland are included within EU trading arrangements. [The Fraser of Allander Institute also found in 2017, Scotland exported £14.9 billion of goods and services to the EU](#) – equivalent to over 45 per cent of international exports According to the [Brexit Vulnerability Index](#), 30% of communities in Glasgow are significantly impacted by Brexit. More people in Glasgow are Brexit-vulnerable than any other local authority in Scotland.
- 1.3 Despite the barriers of Brexit, [Glasgow is the number one large European city for strategy in attracting overseas investment](#), ranking the city above Bilbao, Porto, Dusseldorf and Gothenburg, according to a recent ranking released by fDi Intelligence. In addition to the spot for its foreign direct investment strategies in the European Cities & Regions of the Future 2024, Glasgow also ranked fifth for connectivity and 10th for business friendliness. fDi Intelligence, an investment insights provider that's part of the FT group, said Glasgow has leapt to number one due to the city's "approach to innovation" which "has been forged in partnerships between academia, industry, government and local communities."
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 Glasgow continues to garner European accolades. Last year saw Glasgow celebrate its second reign as European Capital of Sport 2023. We were awarded the European Open Government Partnership 2023 award for 'Citizen Power' in the Inspirational Reforms category. Most recently the Burrell Collection has been nominated for European Museum of the Year 2024.
- 1.6 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

2 Twin Cities

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 Through our Twin Cities projects, we have strengthened Glasgow's ties with our European neighbours, encouraging knowledge and experience exchange, collaboration and friendship.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 **Nuremberg (1985)**
Nuremberg is Glasgow's oldest twin city with a twinning agreement having been signed in 1985. The Bavarian city is the second-largest in the region behind Munich, which lies 170 miles south. It mirrors Glasgow in its population; the city has half a million citizens, while the outer lying metropolitan region is home to more than two million. Nuremberg is a high-tech, innovative manufacturing hub, home to digital and health industries, sustainable energy systems, world leading research institutions.
- 2.5 **Turin (2003)**
Although the official twinning agreement wasn't signed between Glasgow and Turin until 2003, there has been strong links between Glasgow and the Italian city through education for several years. Turin has 908,000 inhabitants and 1.7 million in its metropolitan area. The new millennium brought along a need for renewal and transformation which changed the face of the city both environmentally and in terms of its urban planning, boosting its cultural and tourist offer and improving the citizens' quality of life, with the aim of making Turin a "Smart City".
- 2.6 **Marseilles (2006)**
Marseilles is known as the Mediterranean crossroads and a cradle of multiculturalism with over 870,000 inhabitants and lies in a strategic position for business and trade. Diverse and dynamic, the wider Aix-Marseille-Provence is the second largest metropolis in France with a population of 1.85 million. A long-term goal is to build a sustainable city of tomorrow, both a socially inclusive and climate-resilient city. Winner of the 2023 European Capital of Innovation Award, Marseilles is now a member of the iKEN, the digital collaboration platform for the iCapital alumni network created by Glasgow as part of its 2019 runner up legacy and €100,000 cash award.
- 2.7 **Mykolaiv (2024)**

- 2.8 Glasgow s twinned with the Ukrainian city of Mykolaiv in a show of solidarity and support earlier this year, declared publicly on Saturday, February 24 2024, on the second anniversary of the Russian invasion. The population of Mykolaiv has dropped from 500,000 to around 350,000 as many residents were forced to leave the city to escape bombardment. Both cities share a rich industrial heritage as ship builders. Potential areas of co-operation have been identified as ranging from citizenship to economic development, (re) construction and urban management to the green transition and sustainability reflects our own agenda.

3 Eurocities

- 3.1 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, for example, Glasgow's re-energised example in the Eurocities network, encouraged Marseilles to join the network in 2021.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Eurocities is organised through a range of Forums covering a wide range of topics relevant to city authorities, through Culture/Economy/Environment/ Knowledge Society/Mobility and Social Affairs. Underneath and outwith these sit various Working Groups, Taskforces etc. These are all chaired by cities voted for by the members.
- 3.4 Eurocities participation was used to successfully pitch and secure Glasgow' participation in a number of funded European projects as the Brexit clock ticked down to 31 January 2020. For example, through Eurocities, Glasgow participated in the [URBACT ROOF project](#). Through participation Glasgow was able to continue to make systems and service improvements and demonstrate that [rough sleeping in Glasgow was the lower than any other comparable cities in Europe](#).
- 3.5 Participation in the Eurocities Taskforce on SDG's and wider Environment forum enabled Glasgow to amplify the urban voice in the run up to, during and after COP26. Collaboration with the network enabled access to a range of city leaders and experts, and wider networks. Glasgow, despite Brexit, was central to the [Mayors Alliance for the European Green Deal](#) which was a main European Commission related event in the City Chambers during COOP26. Arising from this, through Eurocities participation, Glasgow secured membership of the [EU Mission 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities](#). Of the 100 cities 70 are Eurocities members. Glasgow is one of the few non-EU cities to be chosen to participate.

- 3.6 The Social Affairs Forum (SAF) has 145 active member cities. Glasgow was elected the new Chair of the Social Affairs Forum 2023-2025 at the AGM in June 2023. Our bid was shaped by the Executive Director of Education and Chief Officer of Glasgow's Health and Social Care Partnership and framed around our Grand Challenges. These have now been adopted by the SAF in its workplan and are influencing the network's advocacy of European institutions.
- 3.7 Glasgow had previously served as Vice Chair from Nov 2020, extended beyond the two-year term due to COVID19. Due to domestic challenges in Utrecht, the Chair in the previous term, Glasgow was asked to stand up during that period, and ran unopposed as the Chair last year due to the high esteem for the leadership it had shown.

3.8 Eurocities Forums and Working Groups (WGs)

- 3.8.1 *Social Affairs Forum* – as noted, Glasgow is the SAF Chair and active in a range of Working Groups. Until recently Glasgow served as the [WG Homelessness](#) Chair but was asked to continue contributing as Vice Chair due to its leadership. Our Education Services are seen as leaders, [our award winning Girls@COP26 - The Solutions are Feminist initiative lauded](#), and [Nurturing City approach leading to the European educationalists visiting Glasgow](#) in 2023 for a knowledge exchange.
- 3.8.2 *Culture Forum* –. Glasgow presented its draft culture strategy last years at the annual forum. It also took its Library Vision to the network for peer review. Our work is regularly highlighted e.g. [anti racism in culture](#), to [Burrell Collection innovation, accolades and awards](#). Through participation in the forum Glasgow was selected by the European Commission to participate as one of 10 European cities for [being a leader in innovative practice in the European Heritage Hub - alongside peers from Barcelona to Stockholm](#). Glasgow has honoured as [first host of the project's three visits in early July](#).
- 3.8.3 *Digital Forum* – Glasgow is held in high regard by the Forum and holds it head high amongst other leading European cities like Bordeaux (Chair) and Barcelona, e.g. being asked to represent Eurocities at an OECD co-organised event on platform cooperatives. We [recently shared Glasgow's expertise and new digital strategy](#) in a peer knowledge exchange with Rotterdam and other cities. We are engaging with Amsterdam and Munich on respective work on 3D urban modelling and digital twins.
- 3.8.4 *Mobility Forum* – Glasgow is [active in the Taskforce on Cycling and was heralded](#) in its report to the European Commission last year as best practice for investment and inclusion. Glasgow was also [profiled by the Eurocities network following UCI Cycling World Championship 2023](#), our Cycling and Urban Sports Strategy spotlighted and investment in active travel infrastructure highlighted. Glasgow has been invited by the network to consider joining a Horizon Europe bid on future transport and mobility systems to inform our ambitious Clyde Metro plans and wider strategies.

- 3.8.5 *Environment Forum* – Glasgow was central to the [Mayors Alliance for the European Green Deal](#) which was a main European Commission related event in the City Chambers during COOP26. Arising from this, through Eurocities participation Glasgow secured membership of the [EU Mission 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities](#). Of the 100 cities 70 are Eurocities members. Glasgow is one of the few non-EU cities to be chosen to participate. Through Eurocities participation secured membership of the [URBACT Global Goals for Cities](#) project which reported to the Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee ([28 February 2023](#)). Glasgow continues to be active in various working groups that support its post COP26 legacy and positive outcomes for Glasgow. We are hopeful of securing [New European Bauhaus initiative funding](#) which connects the European Green Deal to our living spaces with the aim of transformation of the built environment and associated lifestyles at the local level.
- 3.8.6 *Economy* – Glasgow’s inclusive economic agenda and innovation puts the city on platform beside other leading cities like Helsinki and Barcelona. We were asked to present on our Just Transition Skills Action Plan in Stockholm last year. Recent agreement of [UK access to Horizon Europe](#) means wider economic benefits may again be open to Glasgow and our leadership may benefit from European funding.
- 3.8.7 *Taskforces and other WGs* – Glasgow benefits from a range of other collaborations. The WG Substance Abuse Prevention has been critical in providing the case for a Safer Drug Consumption Facility and ensuring we learn from best practice. The WG Food Chair, Milan, supported our first Food Summit, and [Copenhagen provided a keynote speaker in our second Food Summit last year congratulating Glasgow’s inspiring approach](#). We have been matched with Groningen as part of the Horizon Europe Food Trails project to co-create a holistic approach to food systems. Championing with Vienna (Chair) [women and girls rights and amplifying their voices across Europe, Glasgow is Vice Chair of the Taskforce on Gender Equality](#). The Lord Provost has signed up to be a Mentor as part of the Eurocities Women City Leaders Mentorship Programme. An Officer from the Lord Provost and International Office attended the Cooperation Platform hosted by Aix-Marseille in November 2023 to network and further opportunities available to Glasgow as well as reinforcing our ties with our European partners.

4 EU Citizens Forum

- 4.1 Whilst a key focus of Brexit was the negative economic impact, Glasgow has also been attentive to the social impact and human costs. Since our [Europe Day motion last year](#), we have continued to put our commitment into action.
- 4.2 A key outcome has been supporting the launch of and working with the EU Citizens Forum since its establishment, supported by the Lord Provost, City Conveners for Communities & Equalities and Culture, Sport & International Relations. 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.

- 4.3 The EU nations represented in the Forum are France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Ireland, Sweden, etc. Ukraine is currently an EU candidate nation: a representative from the city's Ukrainian community also accepted an invitation to join the Forum.
- 4.4 Chaired by Glasgow's Polish Social and Educational Society, its mission is described as wanting the Glasgow's EU Citizen's Forum to be "the city's hand of friendship; one that firmly confirms Glasgow's welcome and unlocks opportunities for the whole city."
- 4.5 Eight per cent of Glaswegians, despite the hurdles of the [EU Settlement Scheme \(52,220 applicants\)](#) - have made their home here – and up to 15% may be able to vote in 2024 European Parliament elections from the estimates of Irish, Italian and other consuls. We are [encouraging all Glaswegians who can do so to exercise their democratic right to vote](#) in the imminent European elections: the Future of Europe will also shape the future of Glasgow. The Council electoral office is working with a number of Consulates (Italy, Romania, etc) to support participation in the [European Parliament elections which are being held from 06 to 09 June 2024](#).
- 4.6 Protecting and promoting EU citizens' rights is a key concern of the Forum. Membership also includes the (EU) Citizens' Rights Project. The City Convener for Workforce and Homelessness and Addiction Services has facilitated Corporate HR dialogue regarding the potential support available to our employees with EU Settlement Status. This will build upon the assistance provided regarding rules surrounding the right to work in the UK and ensure we remain vigilant in supporting employees regarding post Brexit Immigration and Visa Rules in the UK.
- 4.7 Following a civic reception by the Lord Provost on 09 May 2023, the EU Citizens Forum, in collaboration with the Alliance Française and Goethe Institut brought together communities across Glasgow to celebrate our European connections.
- 4.8 As Glasgow looks forward to celebrating its 850th anniversary next year, the Forum is currently discussing how the city can commemorate a milestone year of the modern era, celebrating 1990 when Glasgow was crowned – the first UK - European Capital of Culture.

5 European Union institutions

5.1 Delegation of the European Union to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

- 5.2 From 1 January to 30 June 2024, the Presidency of the Council of the European Union is held by Belgium. Led by the devolved Flanders Government, Glasgow City Council was invited to participate in its keynote conference on "Local Government Approaches to Diversity". Apart from Lviv, Ukraine, Glasgow was the only non-EU – and UK - city to be invited to attend.

- 5.3 On the same day, 19 April 2024, the [EU Ambassador](#), His Excellency Pedro Serrano, visited Glasgow City Chambers and held a meeting with the Lord Provost, the Leader of the Council, City Conveners and members of the EU Citizens Forum. This fruitful event reinforced Glasgow's stance as "open for business" and a city confident in its European identity and connections and keen to continue cooperating with the rest of Europe.
- 5.4 A key point of discussion was the loss of the Four Freedoms the European Union had guaranteed - the free movement of goods, capital, services, and people. This situation has particularly affected the opportunities for young people to experience life on the other side of the Channels and to benefit from youth, cultural, educational, research and training exchanges.
- 5.5 That day the European Commission proposed to [open negotiations with the United Kingdom on an agreement to facilitate youth mobility](#). Such an agreement would make it easier for young EU and UK citizens to study, work and live in the UK and the EU respectively. Unfortunately, Westminster refused this offer the same day.
- 5.6 A recent [motion on European Citizenship and Youth Mobility](#) has instructed the Chief Executive of the Council to write to the UK Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, underlining that the rejection of a youth visa is limiting life chances and opportunities for young people and our wider communities in Glasgow, and to reverse their decisions to not reopen negotiations with the European Commission and to restore youth mobility between the UK and the European Union.
- 5.7 The Chief Executive is also instructed to write to the EU Ambassador to the UK noting this correspondence, and to invite the Ambassador again to visit Glasgow, noting we are a city that is open for economic, social, and cultural collaboration, eager to discuss opportunities like Horizon Europe and to further our engagement, alongside welcoming the Ambassador to our 850th anniversary celebrations which will have Glasgow's place in Europe at its heart.
- 5.8 European Parliament Liaison Office (EPLO)**
- 5.9 We have been engaging with the [European Parliament Liaison Office](#), supporting its efforts to ensure voter participation.
- 5.10 Its purpose is to liaise with Westminster, national parliaments and local government; be a contact point for EU nationals resident in the UK; and engage with the public and civil society.
- 5.11 The [ELPO holds Glasgow in high regard, and in 2022 funded a mural](#) of Thomas Muir, a barrister who was a leading voice of reform for Scottish democracy as a gesture of esteem to the city upon the closure of its Scottish base post Brexit. Respected across Europe and internationally Glasgow born

Muir was tributed for his contribution to the ideals of freedom, democracy and universal suffrage.

- 5.12 We are continuing to engage with the EPLO to support these ideals. Further opportunities to forge European connections are being explored and will hopefully help reverse the [81% decline between 2019 and 2022 in the number of children on school trips to the UK to Europe](#).
- 5.13 We have just confirmed the first Glasgow school participation in the [European Parliament Ambassador Schools programme](#). The programme offers free learning opportunities and resources to UK students, with the aim to encourage democratic participation, civic education, bring European democracy and culture into the classroom, empower students with new skillsets and a better understating of international politics shaping our world. The programme complements our Social Skills Framework and will enhance our children and young people's attainment and future positive destinations.

6 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 European citizens and others underpins this.
- 6.2 As noted, our 850th anniversary celebrations will have Glasgow's place in Europe at its heart.

7 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	Twin city participation has been covered by the Lord Provost and International Office budget and others by various European funds
<i>Legal:</i>	None
<i>Personnel:</i>	Council Officers
<i>Procurement:</i>	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.