



## **Scotland in Europe**

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“Scotland in Europe” is not an empty phrase. Scotland is in Europe whether we like it or not. Scotland has always been in Europe and has benefited enormously from its contacts and connections there from mediaeval times to the present day. The SDA therefore stands for active participation by Scotland in European affairs.

Leaving aside the special chapter of post-independence cooperation between the nations of the so-called British Isles, the rash of European institutions that have emerged since World War 2 (the new “European political architecture”) makes it imperative that Scotland should clarify its position in relation to continental Europe. One such institution, the European Union, stands out from the others in a number of respects and demands special scrutiny here.

The emphasis on political and economic institutions is necessary in this context, but it should not be allowed to overshadow the fact that Scotland will continue to enjoy a multitude of personal and communal links with continental European countries of a social, economic and cultural nature. This is as it should be, and in considering the nature of formal relations at institutional level the SDA is not losing sight of the fact that it is not the whole story.

## **Scotland's Place in Europe**

Geographically, Europe extends from the Atlantic to the Urals. Scotland's sphere of interest on the continent has traditionally encompassed Scandinavia and the Baltic region, the Duchy of Burgundy and the Low Countries, now the Netherlands and Belgium. The numerous trading links, two-way migration and dynastic marriages with these countries are one of the most prominent features of Scottish history down through the centuries.

During the High Middle Ages it was monks from Scotland and Ireland who evangelised Europe right into the depths of Russia, as is shown to this day by the hundreds of Scots Monasteries and Scots Churches that exist all over the continent. The names of Kant, Keith, Loudon and many other Scots and their descendants who gained prominence in European history are revered to this day.

Not too much should be made of the so-called Auld Alliance with France, which was largely a product of the traditional French foreign policy of surrounding France's enemies (in this case England) with a ring of steel through treaties with surrounding smaller states. It rarely worked to Scotland's advantage, and it resulted in the disaster of Flodden in 1513 after the English invaded France and Scotland's treaty obligation to support France led to military defeat and the loss of an entire generation of Scottish leaders. That French policy was later abandoned in favour of European integration, organised in such a manner as to protect France's political and economic interests.

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Now that the relatively short 300-year "British" episode – relative to Scotland's 1,500-year history as a political entity – is nearing its end, it is time to review the nation's relationship with the neighbouring continent of Europe and the 48 European states (49 if one counts the dubious case of Kosovo). This must be approached in the light of first principles as well as of the emerging new European "political architecture", the development of which is very far from being at an end.

The starting point must be Scotland's geographical, and hence geo-economic and geo-political situation, which governs all other considerations.

Topographically, Scotland is a typical Scandinavian country. In round figures, it has approximately 10,000 kilometres of coastline, with some 130 inhabited islands, and a land frontier of only 150 km, running for the most part over uninhabitable mountainous country. There are only two main land routes into and out of the country, on the east and west coasts, as if Scotland were joined to a neighbouring island by two causeways.

Settlement is largely on coastal strips, river valleys and fjords, with vast areas of uninhabitable mountains in between. The geographical latitude, and a position on the north-east Atlantic seaboard, determine Scotland's typically Scandinavian climate and weather, which affect large areas of economic and social policy.

This geographical island situation, borne out by centuries of history, determines that Scotland's links in the first instance ought to be with its Nordic neighbours, who share the problems, and the possibilities for cooperation, of the same physical environment.

It is therefore SDA policy that Scotland should apply for membership of the **Nordic Council** and enhance its links with its Nordic neighbours. In particular, after the unmitigated disaster of the unwarranted EU intervention in the region, we consider it imperative that the administration of the north-east Atlantic waters should be vested in a partnership of Scotland, the Faeroes, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Greenland. This close regional cooperation should take place parallel to participation in a relatively loose all-European system of cooperation.

## **Cooperation on an all-European Basis**

The issue of broader European cooperation is more complex. Unlike other regions of the world, which are mostly represented by single organisations, Europe has a number of major organisations with specialised fields of operation but partly overlapping functions. The principal ones with which Scotland has to concern itself are the 47-member **Council of Europe** (CoE), the 56-member **UN Economic Commission for Europe** (UNECE), the 56-member **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe** (OSCE), the 27-member **European Union** (EU), the 30-member **European Economic Area** (EEA), the 4-member **European Free Trade Association** (EFTA), and the 28-member + 22-partner **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation** (NATO).

This “political architecture” is still in a state of flux, and considerable changes must be anticipated over time. Much of the work that these organisations are carrying out is transitional in nature, and when that transition to a more permanent European situation has been completed will no longer justify the existence of the institutions concerned, at least in their present form.

The work of the **Council of Europe** is largely timeless, especially the European Court of Human Rights, which will remain essential as an appeal instance from national courts.

The others must, however, be expected to lose a large part of their justification when the effects of the Second World War and the Communist system have been overcome, when political conditions are finally stable, the transcontinental infrastructure is complete and economic differences and production costs have been largely evened out.

Another point is the extent to which the development of political institutions at global level, especially the World Trade Organisation, has rendered corresponding European institutions superfluous. There is a body of opinion in Europe, especially Scandinavia, that even the European Economic Area (EEA) is no longer necessary, because the WTO rules provide sufficient protection and regulation.

The European political system will eventually need to be drastically slimmed down to reflect the reduction in the need for regulatory structures at European level. Whether that will actually happen remains to be seen – such systems tend to be self-propagating, even after their original *raison d'être* no longer applies.

At any rate, in the light of the existing situation, the Scottish Democratic Alliance advocates Scottish membership of all of these organisations **with the exception of the European Union**. There are very good reasons for this policy, which it is necessary to explain here.

None of this is intended to deny the undoubted benefits that the EU has brought to continental countries in some fields, and especially the good work it has carried out in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, but the balance of considerations for Scotland's purposes is that membership is, and in the EU's present form will remain, contrary to Scotland's interests

## The European Union

**The 27-member European Union (EU)**, half the size of the major organisations, and representing just over half of the total number of European states, and of the overall European population, **is not "Europe"**. It is the only international organisation in the world that claims to exercise sovereignty over its member states through supranational institutions. This is a clear indication of an underlying political intention to develop it into a centralised European state.

It is also betrayed by the **EU terminology** – "European" Council, "European" Commission, "European" Parliament, and so on, none of which are justified by the number of its member states or by the EU's geographical scope. There are, for example, four European parliaments, of which the other three, called "parliamentary assemblies" have far more democratic legitimacy.

The **Stalinist economic policies** of the EU are repeating all the ideological, centralist planning blunders that led to the downfall of the Soviet Union. Its restrictive rules and practices are increasingly hampering free sustainable economic development. Its bureaucratic regulation is strangling enterprise and efficient business practices. And the justified idealism of its founding generation has long since degenerated into a mindless ideology: integration for the sake of integration.

The EU's **Byzantine decision making procedures** make only the smallest cosmetic concessions to democracy. In fact, the EU is to a considerable extent dominated by thousands of lobbyists who spend vast sums of money in Brussels in order to influence its policies. The resulting neo-conservative policies favouring corporate Europe and the interests of multinational concerns lie behind much of the EU's suffocation and destruction of agriculture, fisheries, small business and individual enterprise.

The centrally organised destruction of two thirds of the **Scottish fishing industry** for the benefit of richer EU members, as well as gross mismanagement in Brussels, has reduced Scotland's wealth-creation capacity by considerably more than £1,500 million *every single year* as well as destroying tens of thousands of jobs, killing an entire way of life, and destroying centuries-old fishing communities and cultural traditions. The same applies to the destruction of the profitable and efficient **Scottish steel industry** in the course of democracy-free rationalisation on an EC basis.

Quite apart from such direct exploitation, **Scotland as a member of the UK is a substantial net contributor to the EU**. Only a fraction of this contribution comes back in the form of EU funding, and even that is rapidly diminishing. The SDA estimates that **Scotland's contribution to the EU has consistently averaged some £532 million every year** - well over £100 for every man, woman and child in the country - **rising to £845 million in 2010** including Scotland's proportion of the UK's IMF and direct aid towards the euro crisis.

Taken together with the appalling ongoing annual losses through the EU's destruction of most of the Scottish fishing industry and other factors, the sum total is that, for Scotland with its population of five millions, **EU membership has been, and continues to be, the country's worst economic disaster for centuries.**

The **SDA** insists that this economic haemorrhage has to stop.

We absolutely reject the so-called "Constitution for Europe" in its resurrected form of the **Lisbon Treaty**, which is simply a means of accelerating the already excessive one-way transfer of power to the centre in Brussels. In particular, we will have no truck with the attempt contained in the treaty to **"Europeanise" all marine biological resources**, which we regard as simply the thin end of a wedge that will end in all marine resources, including oil, gas and minerals, being annexed by Brussels.

This is especially crucial in the light of the powers over **energy** that have been transferred to the EU by the treaty, and the forthcoming annexation of **Scotland's national waters** as EU waters from the end of 2012. We regard the positively anti-democratic methods that have been adopted to push the Lisbon Treaty through in the teeth of popular opposition all over Europe as a regression to mediaeval standards of government.

We do not regard the **EU Parliament** (the so-called "European Parliament") as a genuinely democratic institution, but rather as window-dressing, as a spurious and unsuccessful attempt to endow the EU with democratic legitimacy. In terms of its geographical coverage, and of the scope of its powers, it is neither European nor a parliament.

We are positively alarmed at the manner in which **fundamental democratic norms** that have been established over centuries, for example the separation of powers, or the direct answerability of legislators to the people, have been contemptuously thrown aside, above all through the Lisbon Treaty. This **lack of democratic accountability** highlights the extreme dangers inherent in the ongoing attempts to endow the EU – half of Europe - with a military capacity unnecessarily duplicating NATO, undermining the OSCE, and attempting to rival the United States.

We view with horror the **massive and widespread corruption** up to the highest levels of the EU apparatus in Brussels, where the auditors have refused to sign the accounts for more than a decade and a half, as well as the brutal measures of repression that have been taken against individual whistleblowers who have dared to expose these malpractices or just to criticise the system.

### **Scotland's European Policy**

Scotland's national interests are those of an offshore island, and do not necessarily coincide with those of landlocked Central and Eastern Europe. **The negligible voting power of a nation of 5 millions within a Union of 500 millions would do nothing to improve on Scotland's present situation within the UK.** The Scottish representatives would be massively outvoted on any issue that did not suit the main players. There is no point in freeing ourselves from London-centred one-size-fits-all policies only to subject ourselves to even more unsuitable remote impositions on a ten times greater European scale.

Furthermore, we cannot envisage how the interests of landlocked Central European states, or those of climatically very different Southern Europe, can be reconciled with the dissimilar interests of countries on the sub arctic seaboard of the north-eastern Atlantic within a system that decrees one set of regulations to govern all of them.

**The SDA reiterates its commitment to cooperation in Europe, and to the European ideals, but at the same time is determined that Scotland's rights and interests are going to be upheld in the process.**

The SDA foresees no problems arising with Scottish membership of **the four major European institutions**, which are all-European in membership and inter-governmental in operation. Their parliaments have genuine decision making powers, and have considerably more democratic legitimacy in that they consist of delegated members of national parliaments who report back to, and can be held responsible by, their national legislatures.

The half-European EU, on the other hand, is not only **a totally unacceptable economic drain on Scotland**, but is also an ideological construct with inherent weaknesses that are positively dangerous in terms of political and economic stability. This is particularly true of certain provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. Its lack of the normal checks and balances, and the absence of a genuinely democratic decision making structure, make it simply too dangerous to consider.

Another reason why there can be no question of Scottish membership of the EU is because that would involve **compulsory adoption of the Euro currency** that has been such a disaster on the geographical periphery of the continent. Membership would also involve a commitment to participation in EU military operations abroad, along with other considerations.

Any economic advantages of the European Union can be realised through Scottish membership of the 30-member **European Economic Area** (EEA), which includes all of the EU member countries. The economic benefits of the EEA would be further enhanced by membership of the **European Free Trade Association** (EFTA), whose 20 trading agreements with other parts of the world are not open to EU members.

The **EEA** provides open access to the Single European Market as well as the European research and development facilities, allows participation in drafting EU legislation, leaves Scotland its own fishing and agriculture policies and more, and provides all the economic benefits that Scotland needs.

**The EEA is in effect the Common Market continuing, which is the limit to what was approved by the Scottish voters in the 1975 referendum. No degree of European integration beyond this has democratic legitimacy in Scotland.**

One propaganda myth has to be dispelled here. It is untrue that the EFTA side of the EEA has to accept all the EU economic legislation as it stands without consultation. Under Articles 99 to 101 of the EEA Agreement the EFTA members of the EEA have exactly the same rights as its EU members as regards participation in the drafting of economic legislation. This includes alterations to existing EU regulations, and membership of relevant EU Commission committees.

EEA membership would allow **the unhindered restoration of the Scottish fishing industry** and other wealth creators that are presently being strangled by EU ideology. It would **free Scottish agriculture** from the Brussels straitjacket. This move alone could result in a substantial rejuvenation of the Scottish economy.

A move to the EFTA side of the EEA, from Scotland's present part-membership of the EU/EEA side, **would cause no disruption whatever to Scotland's economic links with Europe**, which would continue unchanged. No action would be required to leave the EU side of the EEA – **since Scotland as such has never been a member of the EU it only needs to refrain from applying to join.**

## **Our Conclusions**

The lessons for Scotland are clear: For the moment at least, we cannot afford to stay entirely outside the European structures, and the last thing we need is barriers of any kind, but **Scotland's special geo-economic situation, and the resulting divergence of interests from those of landlocked continental countries, dictates an individual approach to integration in Europe.**

This situation may resolve itself in time. One topic now being discussed in informed circles all over Europe is the possibility of **differential integration**, rather than the likes of the monolithic EU structure. This would mean that membership terms would be tailored to the specific needs of individual countries. How far this is practicable, and likely to be realised, remains to be seen. The EEA is, however, a first step in this direction.

Another development of interest to Scotland is the **Common European Economic Space** that was agreed in principle with Russia in 2003 as part of a larger package of four "spaces".

When complete it will include Russia, the EU and EEA countries, and probably certain others. The Russians, a major European people, have no intention of joining the EU, but they insist on a level economic playing field in Europe. This is entirely in accord with Scotland's position.

**In the longer term these developments could free the core EU members in Central Europe to realise a closer degree of union like the EU among themselves, leaving those in an outer circle to adopt a looser form of integration more suited to their special needs.**

The **Scottish Democratic Alliance** is keeping all such initiatives and developments under close scrutiny, but its current policy for Scotland in Europe after resumption of sovereignty must be based on existing reality rather than a hypothetical future situation. That reality dictates the following:

1. Scottish membership of all of the major intergovernmental European organisations: Council of Europe (**CoE**); United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (**ECE**); Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (**OSCE**); and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (**NATO**).
2. Immediate Scottish membership of the European Economic Area (**EEA**) and European Free Trade Association (**EFTA**).
3. Scottish membership of the **Nordic Council** and the development of close cooperation with Scotland's Scandinavian neighbours, especially as regards the management of the north-east Atlantic.
4. Possible Scottish membership of other specialised European organisations (the European Space Agency, CERN, etc.) to be a matter of current policy.
5. No application to join the European Union (**EU**) in its present form, which is inimical to Scottish interests. In view of the EU's supranational objectives, and the drastic loss of national sovereignty they would involve, any such move would require the approval of the Scottish people in a referendum.

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