

SCOTLAND IN THE EU: GOOD FOR SCOTLAND, GOOD FOR EUROPE

Supportive voices from Brussels
for Independent Scotland's EU future

*A project by Yes for EU
and Europe for Scotland
Spring 2025*



Scotland in the EU: Good for Scotland, Good for Europe

**Interim report of a project by
Yes for EU and
Europe for Scotland
October 2025**

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Executive Summary

On 9th April 2025, six Euro-Scottish activists, together with two former Scottish Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), travelled to Brussels to meet with MEPs in the European Parliament (EP). We aimed to find out whether MEPs would support a Scottish application to join the European Union (EU) and whether there would be any barriers, once Scotland is an independent country.

Twelve MEPs agreed to meet with us, either in person, or represented by their Parliamentary Assistants (PAs). The willingness of MEPs to meet us was remarkable, given the current intense political agenda in a context of global instability and international tensions. The MEPs' interest in hearing from grassroots campaign organisations, even in the absence of significant developments regarding Scottish independence, highlights how Scotland's future is a salient issue for many Europeans.

The MEPs we spoke to all supported the idea of Scottish EU membership and agreed that there would likely be a majority in favour in the current EP. They suggested ways to voice these opinions both in Scotland and within the European institutions. In the meantime the MEPs are keen to ensure that the views of the devolved nations on issues such as Erasmus+, creative exchanges, renewable energy and net zero, are more widely known, during the Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) reset talks. It was also suggested that we make contact with the EU's Enlargement Commissioner, to find out more about the accession route for a newly independent nation.

Videos of our visit to the EP and interactions with some of the MEPs were recorded by the independent media organisation, Scottish Independence Podcasters. These videos have been posted on social media and were shared with the public on 9th May in Edinburgh, during a special Europe Day event, which included a speech by the Scottish Government Equalities Minister, Kaukab Stewart MSP.

The discussion at the Edinburgh event highlighted the importance of building on these relationships with MEPs and amplifying their messages, particularly at significant moments during Scotland's independence debate. The successful outcome of this year's project, which was organised in a cost-effective manner, reinforced our view that a further trip to Brussels in spring 2026, to collect supportive MEPs' views ahead of the Scottish Parliamentary election in May, could be important in building the case for Scottish independence in the EU.

For more information see also:

- Report from the Coppieters Foundation:
[Insights from Our Study Visit to the European Parliament on Scotland, Brexit, and the Future of EU Relations](#)

- YouTube videos of our meetings with MEPs:
[EU Keeping a light on for Scotland](#)
[Europe wants Scotland back](#)

Proposed follow-up actions

- Share Scottish Government reports and position papers that are relevant to the EU-UK TCA reset talks with the MEPs, via the Press and Campaigns officer for The Greens/European Free Alliance¹.
- Organise an Erasmus+ themed event with interested MEPs and MSPs during October/November 2025.
- Exchange ideas for themed visits, e.g. on culture, housing, renewable technologies and net zero, with local experts and interested MEPs and MSPs, starting from October/November 2025.
- Organise another, possibly conference-style visit to the EP, during the run-up to the next Scottish parliamentary election (February-April 2026).
- Explore the possibility of a meeting with the Enlargement Commissioner to find out how to smooth the route to EU membership for Scotland as a newly independent state that had been part of the EU for 47 years.

Supporters of the Scotland in the EU project

We are extremely grateful to the following organisations for their support for this project:



¹ These reports and position papers have been sent to the Press and Campaigns officer for The Greens/European Free Alliance

Scotland in the EU: Good for Scotland, Good for Europe

Contacting supportive MEPs willing to speak to us

This project is an ongoing collaboration between two grassroots organisations: [Yes for EU](#) (YfE) which is based in Scotland and campaigns for a legally recognised route to Scottish independence and full EU membership, and [Europe for Scotland](#) (EfS) which is a pan-European civil society initiative that brings together citizens from all across Europe who want to express solidarity with Scotland post-Brexit and are united in their conviction that an independent Scotland should be welcomed back into the EU.

[On 23 June 2016](#), people in Scotland voted to Remain within the EU by a margin of 24 per cent: 62 per cent for Remain, and 38 per cent for Leave. There was a majority in favour of remaining in the EU, in every one of Scotland's 32 local authority areas. Yet despite the nation's clear and unanimous mandate to Remain, arrangements to retain some of its ties with the EU were never provided, and proposals from the Scottish Government for a "soft Brexit" were ignored by successive UK governments. In 2020, Scotland was removed from the EU along with the rest of the UK. Scotland's formal relationship with the EU is now determined by the agreements struck between the UK Government and the EU – the [Withdrawal Agreement](#), and the [Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#). Because of the UK Government's negotiating preferences and "red lines" Scotland has been removed from the European Single Market - which, by population, is around seven times the size of the UK - and the Customs Union. The [Office for Budget Responsibility](#) (OBR) expects the UK's GDP to be 4% lower in the long run because of Brexit. That equates to [£3 billion](#) in lost public revenues for Scotland, each and every year.

Street campaigning by independence activists has indicated that fear of being outside both the UK and the EU is preventing some Scots from supporting independence; many believe that the EU would not welcome Scotland as a member. [Professor Sir John Curtice](#) says that the debate about being part of the EU is crucial to how voters will come to regard Scotland's constitutional future. A [YouGov poll](#) has suggested that the support for independence would rise by more than 10%, if it meant that Scotland could join the EU. The [most recent polling](#) puts the pro-independence voting intention above 50% (don't knows removed). We were keen, therefore, to find out whether current MEPs from European countries would welcome Scotland back into the EU, if it was an independent country.

In the run-up to the 2024 European elections, more than 30 candidates signed [a pledge](#) from Europe for Scotland "to work in the next EP to

ensure that any application from Scotland to rejoin the EU will be welcomed with a spirit of friendship and solidarity". We therefore wrote to the supportive MEPs who had been elected, requesting a meeting with them in early April 2025. Scottish MEPs were part of the Greens/European Free Alliance group prior to Brexit, so we also contacted their Press and Campaigns officer who kindly contacted MEPs belonging to this group on our behalf. A total of 12 MEPs agreed to meet with us, or send a representative, on 8/9th April. Each of these MEPs was sent a copy of a specially prepared briefing, explaining the Scottish independence/post Brexit debate (see Appendix 1).

Grateful thanks are due to Valentina Servera Clavell, Roccu Garoby and all the MEPs and PAs who made time during their busy schedules to come and speak to us - a small group of pro-EU activists. We were extremely heartened by their enthusiasm for Scottish membership of the EU and their willingness to be proactive by suggesting follow-up activities designed to show the benefits of EU membership to the Scottish public.

We sincerely hope that Scottish MSPs will also take part in the themed visits, which are proposed for autumn 2025.



I wish to express my solidarity with all Scottish citizens who were deprived of a vote in this election by Brexit, and pledge to work in the next European Parliament to ensure that any application from Scotland to rejoin the EU is welcomed with a spirit of friendship and solidarity.

I support the Scottish people's democratic will to be part of the EU, and believe they can help us build a better Europe.



Pledge made by MEPs

Part One: Visit to the European Parliament

Three members of the YfE team and three members of EfS, plus former Scottish MEPs Heather Anderson and Alyn Smith, formed the Euro-Scottish Delegation that travelled to Brussels on 8th April, in time for a meeting in a reserved room in the EP the following day. Our mission was to ask the MEPs whether they believed there would be any barriers to Scotland's re-entry to the European Union, once the country has achieved independence. Scottish Independence Podcasters, Fiona McGregor and Marlene Halliday, were invited to accompany the Delegation in order to record the whole event. A press release detailing this event was sent to the Scottish media on 3rd April 2025 (see Appendix 2).

We were warmly welcomed to the EP, on the morning of the 9th April, by Roccu Garoby, Deputy Secretary of the Greens/European Free Alliance (EFA) and Valentina Servera Clavell, Press Communications and Campaigns Officer (Greens/EFA).

The Euro-Scottish Delegation were able to discuss a range of important issues with the MEPs and their Pas, some of whom also agreed to provide a short message for the Scottish people, on camera.

MEPs interviewed

- Thomas Waitz, Austrian MEP, Former Chair of the European Green Party. (Greens/EFA)
- Nicolae Ștefănuță, Romanian MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament. (Greens/EFA)
- Diana Riba i Giner, Catalan MEP (EFA – Greens/EFA)
- Vicent Marzà, Valencian MEP (EFA – Greens/EFA)
- Terry Reintke, German MEP (Greens/EFA)
- Brando Benifei, Italian MEP (Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats)
- Pär Holmgren, Swedish MEP (Greens/EFA)



Diana Riba i Giner MEP discussing Erasmus+ with former MEPs Heather Anderson & Alyn Smith

Parliamentary Assistants interviewed

- Charlotte Bechert, parliamentary assistant of Nela Riehl, (Greens/EFA – Volt)
- Rina Hajdari, parliamentary assistant of Damian Boeselager, (Greens/EFA – Volt)
- Emily Keane, parliamentary assistant of Cynthia Ní Mhurchú (Renew/Fianna Fáil- Ireland)
- Saga Sjöberg, parliamentary assistant of Pär Holmgren (Greens/EFA)
- Olga Perez Vitoria, EFA Advisor on Culture and Education

Topics discussed with MEPs and PAs

Brexit impacts: All MEPs agreed that Brexit had been detrimental to both the UK and the EU27. There was particular sadness regarding the loss of cultural links as a result of the withdrawal from the Erasmus programme and the need for visas to visit Scotland and other parts of the UK. It is now much more difficult for European performers to visit the UK and for their counterparts in Scotland to visit the EU27 because the UK has left Creative Europe.

Erasmus+: It was recognised that Scotland and Wales are in favour of the UK joining the Erasmus+ programme. The EU wants to hear the views of all four UK nations. The possibility of a Zoom meeting with stakeholders was mooted. It was suggested that re-entry into the Erasmus+ programme could be negotiated separately, not part of the TCA reset. There was a request for information on the UK government's Turing programme².

Trade and Cooperation Agreement reset talks: It was agreed that inputs from all four UK nations are needed, particularly concerning Scottish devolved issues (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, education, environment, healthcare, sport, arts and tourism). The MEPs would like information on the Scottish government's views on ways of improving trade and co-operation with the EU, so that they can ensure that these views are heard during the relevant meetings.

EU enlargement: The MEPs recommended that contact is made with the Enlargement Commissioner, Marta Kos, to find out more about the accession route for a newly independent nation. [Ten countries](#) are currently involved in EU accession talks. It was discussed how, once Scotland is independent, a fast track accession process could be followed which could take as little as two years, so long as divergence is minimised in the meantime. Several of the MEPs said that, at the moment, there would be a large EU parliamentary majority in support of including

² The Turing Scheme is limited to the UK and British overseas territories. Applications for the 2025 to 2026 academic year are now closed.

independent Scotland in the enlargement process, despite the presence of the far right. Germany is particularly interested in Scotland's renewable energy powerhouse and its developing green hydrogen sector. It was said that Scotland would be one of the more wealthy countries, as a member of the EU.



Vicent Marzà MEP being interviewed by Marlene and David

The route back to EU membership – The MEPs believe that the case for those of us who wish to live in democratic countries to work together is now stronger than ever. The MEPs are keen to visit Scotland to strengthen ties with Scottish voters and politicians, on a regular basis, starting in the autumn of 2025 (prior to the Holyrood election period). They suggested that the visits could be themed e.g. Erasmus+, culture, housing, renewables and net zero. Concern was expressed about the rise of the far right Reform party in England.

Part Two: Europe Day Event

Public event in Edinburgh, 9th May 2025

This event was organised in order to present the ‘supportive MEPs’ voices from Brussels’, via video clips, to the Scottish public. The event was held in Augustine United Church in central Edinburgh and hosted by the Yes for EU team (Elise, Morag, David, Lesley, Peter and Sam). The following guests took part:

- Kaukab Stewart, Scottish Government Minister for Equalities and former Minister for Europe
- Cllr Heather Anderson, former Scottish MEP
- Alyn Smith, former Scottish MEP
- Assa Samaké-Roman, French free-lance journalist
- Andrea Pisauo, Europe for Scotland

The event was fully booked, with sixty-six members of the public participating in person and many more online, via Zoom. Refreshments were provided for everyone in the hall.

A pamphlet summarising the ‘Supportive Voices from Brussels’ project had been produced by the YfE Team and copies were given to all participants (see Appendix 3).

Terry Reintke MEP, sent a short video message wishing all participants a Happy Europe Day! Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKLZ-srPFXA>

Throughout the proceedings, video clips were shown from the visit by the Euro-Scottish Delegation to the EP, including expressions of solidarity concerning the possibility of Scotland re-joining the EU, which MEPs and PAs had made to camera.

Heather Anderson and Alyn Smith were interviewed by Assa Samaké-Roman about their visit to the EP. Heather said they were “blown away” by the positive reception that they received and explained that the MEPs had been impressed by the fact that the visit had been organised by two grassroots organisations. Alyn stressed that the MEPs all want to hear more from Scotland, despite Brexit, particularly on key issues such as renewable energy and higher education. Assa then chaired a lively Q&A with Heather, Alyn and other members of the Euro-Scottish Delegation, with participants. Questions centred on ways of strengthening links between Scottish politicians and the EU and getting the MEPs’ supportive voices out to more voters, especially young people.



Assa Samaké-Roman interviewing former MEPs Heather Anderson and Alyn Smith

In response, Minister Kaukab Stewart reassured everyone that the Scottish Government is committed to independence in the EU and wants to further strengthen links with EU partners. She stressed Scotland's positive record on human rights and said that Scottish standards will continue to be aligned with those of the EU as far as possible. The Minister then drew attention to the many position papers and reports that the Scottish Government has produced to inform the TCA reset process. She added that resets could not replace actual membership of the EU.

Andrea Pisauo of EfS made a final plea for everyone to roll up their sleeves and elect a pro-independence and pro-EU government at Holyrood in May 2026!

These proceedings were live streamed via the YfE and EfS YouTube channels:

[Yes for EU: 9 May 2025 Europe Day event](#)

Feedback from participants

Participants were asked to provide feedback on post-it notes, and longer feedback messages were sent to us via email. All comments were positive and many included suggestions for future events during the lead-up to the Scottish elections in 2026.

Scotland in the EU project outputs

- Scottish Indy Podcasters' YouTube videos: [EU Keeping a light on for Scotland](#)
[Europe wants Scotland back](#)
- Articles in The National newspaper : [Brussels is holding the EU door open for Scotland](#)
[How campaigners are fighting for Scotland to get back into EU](#)
[Independence in Europe means saying yes to people, not fear](#)
- Yes for EU video of 9th May event in Edinburgh: [Europe Day Event](#)

Appendix 1

Briefing sent to MEPs prior to our visit

Scotland in the EU: Good for Scotland, Good for Europe



Good for Europe

Scotland's return to the EU would reinforce the union's democratic principles, as Scots overwhelmingly voted to remain and continue to see themselves as European. With well-established democratic institutions, Scotland meets EU accession standards, which will make its return smoother than that of newer candidate countries. Its [highly educated](#), English-speaking workforce would help alleviate labour shortages across Europe, while rejoining Erasmus+ would revitalise academic exchanges and collaboration.

Economically, Scotland's vast [renewable energy resources](#) could play a key role in the EU's green transition, reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Its re-entry into the single market would boost trade, particularly benefiting Northern Ireland and easing EU-UK economic tensions. Geopolitically, Scotland's membership would help strengthen the EU after Brexit. As ample evidence shows, [Brexit was Putin's project](#)—a key step in his broader plan to weaken Europe.

Good for Scotland

Scotland is still the most pro-EU nation in the United Kingdom: In 2016 every local authority in Scotland, 62% of voters overall, chose to remain in the EU. By 2022 the number of pro EU supporters [had increased to 72%](#)!

A recent [YouGov poll](#) suggests that the vote for independence would rise from 44% to 56% if it meant that Scotland could rejoin the EU. [80% of Yes supporters](#) agreed that outcomes in terms of key indicators, such as trade, the economy, our voice in the world, the NHS and the gap between rich and poor, would be much better if we were part of the EU.

Almost every town and city in Scotland has at least one active 'Yes' group, i.e. pro independence group. 142 of these grass-roots groups are affiliated to the national umbrella organisation [Believe in Scotland](#) and most are committed to EU membership, including [Yes for EU](#). The [European Movement in Scotland](#) is affiliated to the European Movement UK. It is also committed to EU membership, however many of their members prefer to wait for the whole of the UK to rejoin.

So what can you do?

Of the three political parties that campaign for Scottish independence, only the Scottish National Party and the Scottish Greens support EU membership, while the Alba Party is pro-EFTA.

The SNP vote declined significantly during [the 2024 UK general election](#) largely because of voters' overwhelming desire to kick the right-wing Tories out of the Westminster government. However, the number of voters who want independence and EU membership remains stable. We hope to see a resurgence of pro-independence parties at the Scottish Parliamentary election in May 2026.

This means that **we must be able to reassure Scottish voters that independence will lead to EU membership**. We want to be confident that an independent Scottish application won't be blocked by any EU member country and that our previous 47 years of membership will mean that we won't spend too long outside both the rUK (i.e. the remaining nations of the UK) and the EU.



March for independence and EU membership, Edinburgh, September 2023

Do you support the Scottish people's democratic will to be part of the EU? Will you work to ensure that any application from Scotland to rejoin is welcomed with a spirit of friendship and solidarity?

[Join Europe for Scotland's 'Speak up for Scotland campaign'](#)

Appendix 2

Press Release sent to Scottish media prior to the Brussels visit



Politicians and activists remind MEPs to keep the light on for Scotland

**Former Scottish MEPs and activists head to Brussels
ahead of historic Europe Day** Edinburgh, 3/4/2025

One month before Europe celebrates the 75th anniversary of the founding Schuman Declaration, a Scottish and European delegation will meet MEPs to reaffirm Scotland's desire to rejoin the EU.

On **April 9th**, members of the Scottish campaign **Yes for EU** and the pan-European initiative **Europe for Scotland**, in partnership with the **Coppieters Foundation**, plus **former MEPs Heather Anderson and Alyn Smith**, will travel to the **European Parliament in Brussels**, urging recently elected MEPs to pledge support for Scotland's re-entry to the European Union if the country votes for independence.

In 2016, **Scots voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU** (62% Remain to 38% Leave) but were dragged out against their will by the Leave majority in England. MEP Alyn Smith urged colleagues in a final emotional speech in the European Parliament to ['keep the light on' for Scotland](#). Now he is a leading member of the delegation urging MEPs to keep Scotland's case for renewed membership alive.

Before the 2024 European elections, *Europe for Scotland* produced the [Speak Up for Scotland](#) campaign, which secured pledges of support from **37 European Parliament candidates across 11 EU countries**. Of those, **10 were elected and are now part of the European Parliament**, reinforcing Scotland's strong backing within the EU.

So far, **MEPs from Austria, Italy, Ireland, Romania, Spain, and Sweden have agreed to meet with the delegation**. The Euro-Scottish delegation seeks to return with messages of friendship and support, assuring Scottish voters that independence can pave the way for EU membership. Key questions will be addressed, including:

- Why would Scotland rejoining be good both for Scotland and the EU?
- Will Scotland's previous 47 years in the EU mean a swift return?
- Can Scots be confident that no EU country would block their application?
- How can Scotland help Europe counter Trump's aggressive policies towards the EU?
- Can the European Parliament express its view on Scotland's European future?

Info about the Euro-Scottish delegation

[Alyn Smith](#) served as MEP for Scotland from 2004 to 2019. He was MP for Stirling and Strathallan from 2019 to 2024 and from December 2022 to July 2024 he has been serving as the SNP Spokesperson for Europe and EU Accession.

[Heather Anderson](#) briefly served as MEP for Scotland in 2020 before Brexit ended the UK membership of the EU. She is now a councillor in the city of Dundee for the Scottish National Party (SNP).

[Yes for EU](#) is a pro-European grassroots movement advocating for Scotland's rejoining of the European Union. Rooted in the belief that Scotland's future is best served within the EU, the group promotes public engagement, political dialogue, and campaigning efforts to build support for independence as a pathway to EU membership.

[Europe for Scotland](#) is a pan European initiative expressing solidarity with Scotland post Brexit. It was founded in 2021, when it launched an [open letter](#) signed by [170 prominent European writers, artists and cultural figures](#) and [published simultaneously in 10 European countries](#). The letter demanded clarity and goodwill from the European Parliament, Council and Commission about Scotland's right to rejoin the EU as an independent country. To date [nearly 16,000 citizens have signed](#) from all 27 EU member states and all UK nations. In the aftermath of the 2023 UK supreme court judgement, Europe for Scotland organised [gatherings of solidarity with Scotland](#) in many European cities, including Brussels, Berlin, Paris and Rome.

Info about events

The Euro-Scottish delegation will be in Brussels on the **9th of April** and is available to meet MEPs, their members of staff and journalists in **room 15G177** within the European Parliament from **10am-4pm**.

A social event open to all European citizens in Brussels will be held **at 6pm on the 9th April** at **The Network, 11 Place du Luxembourg**. All European friends of Scotland are welcome to come and meet us.

The delegation's findings and messages of support from MEPs will be shared with the public at a special Europe Day event on **May 9th at 6:30 PM in Augustine United Reform Church, Edinburgh**. The event, titled **Scotland in the EU: Good for Scotland, Good for Europe**, will be open to all and live-streamed for those unable to attend in person. **Free tickets can be booked at [Eventbrite](#)**.

Quotes from the Euro-Scottish delegation

"Scotland belongs in Europe. This trip will not only strengthen our ties with MEPs but also demonstrate that our European neighbours are ready to welcome us back," said [Yes for EU Convenor, Elise Tallaron](#). "One month before the 75th anniversary of the founding Schuman

Declaration, we want to celebrate European solidarity and show Scots that **a European future for Scotland** is not only within reach but also **a desire shared by many Europeans,”** said [Andrea Pisauro and Nina Jetter, political coordinators for Europe for Scotland](#).

[Former Scottish MEP Alyn Smith](#) declared: **“Independence in Europe will transform, revolutionise Scotland.** Getting back into the EU will put rocket boosters on our recovery, and at a time when every public budget is under pressure it has never been more important to make Scotland’s connections to the EU real. I’m very proud to be supporting Yes for EU and Europe for Scotland in their efforts, and glad to be part of this important delegation to keep in touch with our friends across the EU.”



Alyn Smith at a rally in Oct 22. Photo courtesy of Scott Liddell

[Former Scottish MEP Heather Anderson](#) added: “Here in Scotland we remain committed to re-joining the European Union as an independent nation. In a daily changing world, reaffirming our commitment to Europe has never been more vital. I welcome this opportunity to work with Yes for EU to publicly meet with our friends in Europe.”

This event is in partnership with the [Coppieters Foundation](#) and the [Scottish Independence Foundation](#).



Appendix 3

8-page pamphlet describing the project

Copies were given to participants at the Europe Day event on 9th May in Edinburgh, and have been distributed at other events in the months thereafter. It can be downloaded from the Yes for EU website, www.yesforeu.scot.

