

**Standing Council on Europe
Minutes of Meeting of 30 April 2018**

Members in attendance:

Vasco Cal;
Charles Grant;
Sir John Grant;
Dame Mariot Leslie;
David Martin MEP;
Prof Alan Miller;
Prof Sir Anton Muscatelli;
Sir George Reid;
Anne Richards;
Grahame Smith;
Alyn Smyth MEP;
Fabian Zuleeg;
Sir Martin Donnelly (guest speaker).

Ministers in attendance:

First Minister of Scotland;
Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs;
Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe;
Minister for International Development and Europe.

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe opened the meeting with a welcome to Sir Martin Donnelly who attended to speak about Future UK and International Trade.

2. Update

The Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe provided an update on Scottish Government activity since the last meeting. This included proposals for engagement with the UK Government on the Scottish Government's input to negotiations and the upcoming meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations. There was also an update on the EU (Withdrawal) Bill and the constitutional implications of EU exit noting the further solutions put forward by the Scottish Government to achieve an agreement with the UK Government on the Bill.

3. Discussion on UK-EU Negotiations (including)

(i) Update on UK-EU negotiations

Members provided insight from Brussels, noting the provisional agreement on the transition period and that agreements on citizens' rights and the financial settlement are also close to conclusion. However, the Irish border and governance issues remain unresolved.

There was discussion on financial services and it was noted that European Central Bank and Bank of England have recently established a joint technical working group on Brexit-related risks.

(ii) Irish border issue

It was noted that the UK Government is looking at two options to address the Irish issue – 1) a customs partnership and 2) a maximum facilitation-style arrangement which would rely heavily on technology to minimise border checks. There was a discussion on whether either of these options were feasible and whether agreement was likely before the next meeting of the European Council in June.

(iii) Discussion on Future UK and International Trade

Sir Martin Donnelly gave an overview of the trade aspects of the future UK / EU relationship. Experience shows that trade negotiations are lengthy and from the outset some can take more than two decades depending on breadth and depth. In this context there was discussion about the future relationship Scotland could have in aligning with the EU. The First Minister and Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe departed the meeting due to another engagement.

4. Wider diplomatic strategy

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs reported on the Scottish Government's extensive European engagement and other diplomatic activity, and welcomed the strong contributions from Standing Council members to date.

Members were supportive and noted that this engagement and influencing work should continue and be strengthened.

Standing Council Secretariat