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Post-referendum briefing II

First Minister's Visit to Brussels

The First Minister made an initial visit to Brussels on 29 June, where she met with the European Parliament President [Martin Schulz MEP](#), and the leaders of the main political party groups ([Manfred Weber MEP](#), European People's Party; [Gianni Pittella MEP](#), Socialists and Democrats; [Guy Verhofstadt MEP](#), Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe; and [Rebecca Harms MEP](#), Greens), as well as European Commission President [Jean-Claude Juncker](#).

Ahead of the visit, the First Minister explained that her objective with the visit "at this very early stage", was to raise awareness and make sure there is an understanding among European leaders that Scotland voted differently than the UK as a whole. She said there is a cross-party aspiration and desire in Scotland to protect Scotland relationship with the EU and our place in the EU. She further explained that the visit comes at the beginning of a process of mapping out and exploring the options for Scotland.

Some comments on social media following the meetings:

- "@JunckerEU now: "I'll listen to @NicolaSturgeon. #Scotland won their right to be heard in #Brussels"."
- Manfred Weber MEP (in German): "As a Bavarian I am convinced of the importance of strong regions for #Europe. Meeting with FM @NicolaSturgeon #Scotland" and "interesting meeting to learn about #Scotland's position on upcoming developments".
- Socialists & Democrats Group: "We expressed sympathy for Scottish attachment to EU with Sturgeon. We'll observe how this internal UK issue develops"
- [Guy Verhofstadt](#): "BBC: "(Can Scotland) stay (in EU) without having to join a queue?"
Guy Verhofstadt: "Yeah, they are in for the moment so there is no problem on that side""

The FM's visit ended with a press briefing in Scotland House, with a [full house of journalists](#). The FM said she was "heartened by the sympathetic and positive discussions I've had with EU leaders today" and she has found a "willingness to listen". She reiterated that "we are at an early stage in this process" and she "respects that this is a UK as a Member State with the EU negotiation". She explained that her task is to "ensure that once the UK's negotiation with the EU starts, that all options are on the table". She reiterated that "this is a situation I did not choose to be in". She said that she had emphasised that Scotland voted to remain part of the EU, and that she now has "a duty as FM to respond to and to seek to give effect to the democratic will of the people of Scotland". "If there is a way for Scotland to stay in the EU, I am determined to try and find that way", she said.

News videos from the press briefing can be found on the [@ScotGovFM](#) twitter feed.

European Council Summit

Prime Minister David Cameron met his EU counterparts for a European Council Summit in Brussels on 28 June. "The tone of the meeting was of sadness and regret," Cameron said afterwards. He said that the UK "won't turn its back on Europe" and "should seek the closest possible relations over trade and security" with the EU.

The official statement from European Council President Donald Tusk notes that leaders "expect the intentions of the UK government to be specified as soon as possible." The

decision to notify the European Council of the UK's decision and start the withdrawal process lies solely with the UK Government. Cameron maintains that it will be his successor who does this. In response to a suggestion from journalists that the UK may not leave the EU, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said, "I see no possibility to reverse this. We would do well to accept this reality."

Brussels media also reports that Cameron and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker clashed on the issue of free movement, with Cameron allegedly citing the EU's failure to resolve British concerns on immigration as a factor in the outcome of the referendum.

The following day, the 27 Heads of State or Government (excluding David Cameron) met for an informal European Council Summit, at which they expressed their sadness at the outcome of the referendum, but noted that they "respect the will expressed by a majority of the British people." Once the UK has notified the 27 leaders of its intention to leave the EU, the European Council will adopt guidelines for the negotiations between the UK and the EU.

Leaders said, "In the future, we hope to have the UK as a close partner of the EU and we look forward to the UK stating its intentions in this respect. Any agreement, which will be concluded with the UK as a third country, will have to be based on a balance of rights and obligations. Access to the Single Market requires acceptance of all four freedoms." These four freedoms on which EU market access are predicated are free movement of goods, services, capital, and people.

Leaders also started a political reflection on the development of the EU with 27 Member States. They will continue talks on 16 September in Bratislava.

Scottish Standing Council on Europe

The Scottish Government has announced details of a Standing Council of experts to advise on securing Scotland's relationship with the EU. Several Scotland Europa members are on the Council, including the Council's Chair Anton Muscatelli (University of Glasgow), Scotland Europa's Chair Grahame Smith (Scottish Trades Union Congress), Dame Anne Glover (University of Aberdeen), Sir David Edward (University of Edinburgh), Drew Scott (University of Edinburgh), and Lord Kerr (Scottish Power). The Council will Members will consider the impact of proposed changes to the UK's relationship with the EU on Scottish interests and advise Ministers on how best to secure Scottish objectives.

The full list of members is as follows:

- Chair: Professor Anton Muscatelli, Principal and Vice Chancellor, University of Glasgow
- Vasco Cal, former economic adviser at the European Commission
- Sir David Edward, Professor Emeritus at the School of Law, University of Edinburgh and former Court of Justice of the EU Judge
- David Frost, Chief executive of the Scotch Whisky Association
- Dame Anne Glover, Vice-Principal External Affairs & Dean for Europe, University of Aberdeen, and former chief scientific adviser to European Commission President Barroso
- Charles Grant, Centre for European Reform, London
- John Kay, financial markets expert
- Lord Kerr, diplomat, deputy chair, Scottish Power, and member of House of Lords EU Economic Affairs Select Committee
- Dame Mariot Leslie, former UK diplomat
- David Martin, MEP (Labour)
- Amanda McMillan, CEO Glasgow Airport

- Professor Alan Miller, former chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission
- Anne Richards, Chief Executive, M&G Investments
- Frances P. Ruane, Irish academic economist & former director of ESRI
- Alyn Smith, MEP (SNP)
- Grahame Smith, Secretary General , STUC, and Chair, Scotland Europa
- Professor Andrew Scott, Professor of European Union Studies: Dean International (Europe), University of Edinburgh
- Fabian Zuleeg, Chief Executive of Brussels-based think tank the European Policy Centre

Further information:

- [European Council – Remarks by Donald Tusk](#)
- [European Council – Statement by 27 Heads of State or Government](#)
- [Scottish Government – Standing Council on Europe](#)