

Scotland's Place in Europe – Protecting the Interests of Highlands & Islands

Convention of the Highlands & Islands Monday 30th October 2017 The Corran Halls, Oban



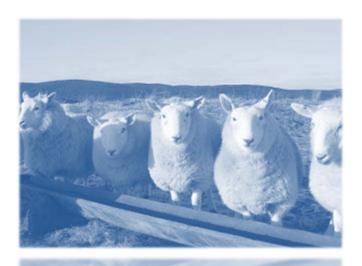
Update on the latest position



Protecting the interests of Highlands and Islands

Context

- Social, economic and cultural benefits for individuals, businesses and communities across Scotland from EU membership
- Scottish Government position is clear, but set within context of UK led negotiations





- Uncertainty following Referendum and status of future relationship has business and social impact
- Particular issues for Highlands and Islands

Demography

- All Highlands and Islands areas are projected to see decreases in their working age populations
- The role of migrants in sustaining numbers of working age population and in supporting ageing populations is critical in Highlands and Islands



 European markets for some products & projects funded through European funding programmes have allowed local people to remain in the area and find employment

Labour Market

 Scotland's remote and rural communities depend on workers from the EU in a range of sectors, for example tourism & the food and drink industry



- Highland and Shetland have a higher proportion of EEA workers than the national average
- The dependency of migrant workers is more marked in the remoter areas

Trade

 Access to the single market is important to many of the Highlands and Islands' key sectors for geographical reasons

 These EU markets cannot be replaced by more distant markets



- A 'Hard Brexit' would heavily impact sections of Scottish agriculture e.g. cattle and sheep
- At risk is also the future protection of Scottish protected food names (like Scotch beef or Stornoway black pudding)

EU Funding

Supports jobs, delivers infrastructure & sustains rural communities



- £5 billion over the life of the current EU budget round (2014-2020)
- Scottish agriculture is more heavily reliant than the rest of the UK on CAP funds and there are fewer alternatives for farmers
- Brexit has created uncertainty for communities across
 Scotland who are unable to plan beyond the UK's departure of the EU

Health

- The free movement of people and the mutual recognition of qualifications allow skilled and experienced health professionals from the EU/EEA to work in our NHS
- Our ability to continue to provide high-quality health and social care services for the people of Scotland will suffer particularly in Scotland's remote and rural communities





Reflections & forward look

Key Discussion Prompts

 What are the key priorities for the Highlands and Islands area?

 In this uncertain environment, what are the key risks and opportunities for Highlands and Islands?

 How can we mitigate the impact of Brexit on the Highlands and Islands area?