

European and External Relations Committee
Scottish Parliament
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Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee call for evidence in relation to the Article 50 withdrawal negotiations and their implications for Scotland.

The Highland Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the call for evidence in relation to the Article 50 withdrawal negotiations and their implications for Scotland.

The Highland Council, along with partners in the Highlands & Islands European Partnership has previously submitted evidence to both the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee (September 2016) and the Economy, Jobs & Fair Work Committee (November 2016). These responses emphasised the importance of migrant labour to the area and the Council would request that these points be considered in any Scottish Government response regarding the implications for Scotland and EU citizens in Scotland of the Article 50 withdrawal treaty.

In terms of the process by which the UK position in relation to the Article 50 withdrawal negotiations is agreed and how Scotland's interests are taken into account, the Council does not wish to raise any specific points but would recommend two underlying principles be borne in mind throughout the Scottish Government's work in this area:-

1. Many public services that will be affected by the withdrawal negotiations are delivered by or directly supported by Local Authorities. In order to ensure Scotland's widest interests are taken into account and not just those of central government, Local Government should be actively involved in the discussions – either individually or through COSLA where appropriate.
2. The Highlands (& Islands) face some specific challenges in particular those related to population & demographics, rurality and the higher costs that this means for day to day living or doing business. These different needs require to be recognised to avoid negotiations resulting in a situation that is beneficial to the majority of Scotland but detrimental to areas such as Highland.

Yours Sincerely

Colin Simpson
Principal Officer – Europe, Tourism & Film