



Press Release

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UK should "confirm" willingness to let Scottish regions use EU money post-Brexit

President of Scotland's local-government association urges UK to accept EU proposal that would give British regions access to cross-border programmes and funding.

The leader of Scotland's local authorities on 4 July called on the UK government to enable Scottish regions to participate in regional programmes funded by the European Union after the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The demand by **Alison Evison**, the President of the [Convention of Scottish Local Authorities](#) (COSLA), came days after the European Commission proposed that British regions – like regions in non-EU states such as Norway and Switzerland – could be considered eligible to take part in cross-border projects funded by the EU's [Interreg](#) programme after the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Councillor Evison was speaking in Brussels at [meetings](#) of associations of local governments, where a range of speakers joined COSLA in voicing concerns at uncertainties created by Brexit. The associations were convened by the [European Committee of the Regions](#) (CoR), which has a consultative role in the EU's decision-making. In a [resolution](#) in May, the CoR urged the EU to allow UK regions to participate "in EU cooperation programmes in a similar fashion that countries, such as, for instance, Norway or Iceland currently do".

Mrs Evison said: "The recent announcement on Interreg, which COSLA and the CoR campaigned for, means that Scottish local communities can continue to be able to work and share best

practice with their counterparts from the rest of Europe. The UK government must now confirm that it is willing to opt into this programme."

She continued: "There is still a huge degree of uncertainty over what Brexit might mean for Scotland's local communities and businesses – and COSLA is therefore determined that the Scottish local dimension is understood during the Brexit process. I want to ensure that COSLA does what we can to minimise any detriment and maintain good EU-UK relationships into the future."

Scotland's politicians currently have an opportunity to shape political debate on EU issues through the CoR, which brings together 350 regional and local politicians from the EU's 28 members.

Councillor Evison said: "COSLA welcomes the CoR's decision, in May, to develop a Joint Committee structure to ensure the CoR's own continued cooperation with UK local and regional authorities during the transition period and beyond. This will avoid a gap in relations as a result of withdrawal."

One of the Scottish members of the CoR – [Mairi Gougeon](#), a Scottish National Party member of the Scottish Parliament for the constituency of Angus North and Mearns – was on 27 June appointed Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment in the Scottish government.

Interreg-funded projects in Scotland include support for creative industries in Dundee, for an employability project in Falkirk, and for the development of Irish-Scottish renewable-energy links.

The importance of continued cooperation between regions in the UK and the EU was highlighted at the meeting by, among others, leaders of local-government associations from the Republic of Ireland, Finland, France and Malta.



The European Committee of the Regions

The European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States. Created in 1994 following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, its mission is to involve regional and local authorities in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. To sit on the European Committee of the Regions, all of its 350 members and 350 alternates must either hold an electoral mandate or be politically accountable to an elected assembly in their home regions and cities.