

REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS - TRAVEL

Executive summary

1. This paper seeks advance approval for attendance at meetings by the Parliament's new nominee to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe for the remainder of the current parliamentary session to 2016.

Issues and Options

2. In June 2013 the SPCB gave approval for travel associated with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (the Congress) up to the end of the current session.
3. The Scottish Parliament makes two nominations: one Full Member and one Alternate Member. The nomination of Jayne Baxter MSP followed the death of Helen Eadie MSP. The Member has been appointed as an Alternate Member on the UK delegation to the regional chamber of the Congress. Her nomination was endorsed by Parliament on 24 June 2014 (S4M-10356). The nomination was then submitted to the Congress for approval at its Bureau on 19 October 2014, with the appointment having immediate effect.
4. The Interests of Members of the Scottish Parliament Act 2006, [schedule, paragraph 7 and paragraph 2.7 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament] requires Members to register and provide details of visits outwith the UK where the visit meets the prejudice test. This provision does not apply if the travel is approved in advance by the SPCB.

Frequency of meetings

5. Detail on the frequency of meetings for the Council of Europe representatives has not been provided as it is difficult to do this accurately for the period through to the end of the session and the frequency of the meetings will be determined by the Full Member's availability to attend meetings. In addition, the Member will be fulfilling a role to which she has been nominated by the Parliament.

Resource Implications

6. Given that all costs are met by the European institutions concerned, there are no financial implications for the SPCB.

Governance issues

7. Advance approval by the SPCB will mean that no reference to Council of Europe travel is likely to be contained in the Register of Interests.

Publication Scheme

8. This paper will be published in line with the SPCB's Publication Scheme.

Next steps

9. The Member will be informed of the SPCB's decision.

Decision

10. The SPCB is invited to give advance approval for travel by Jayne Baxter MSP associated with her position as Alternate Member of the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities for the period up to the dissolution of the Scottish Parliament in 2016.

Clerk to the European and External Relations Committee
November 2014