SCOTTISH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: A DEEPENING RELATIONSHIP WITHIN A MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE SETTING

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"Scottish Local Governments in the European Union: A Deepening Relationship within a Multi-Level Governance Setting"

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Abstract: This article examines Scottish local governments' engagement in the European Union utilising a survey of local government officials. It argues that there are both domestic and European-level reasons why local authorities may reduce the resources they devote to EU activities. The article concludes, however, that this is not occurring. Local government engagement with the European Union in this instance is driven more by the extent to which EU decisions impact upon the local councils' policy remit, rather than by the desire to secure EU funding or to by-pass more senior levels of government.

Introduction

Since 1973, Scottish local authorities have been aware that the European Union is relevant to their work, and have sought, among other things, to secure information about EU legislation and gain access to the structural funds. Currently, however, domestic and European developments may lead local authorities to reassess their EU work and potentially reduce this activity. Devolution may encourage local authorities to leave EU work to the new Scottish-level institutions. At the European level, there may be a reduced financial pay-off for Scottish local authorities from EU lobbying. While financial decisions for the post-2006 period are yet to be taken, the 2004 EU enlargement will almost certainly reduce the structural funds available to current member states.

Scottish local authorities are nevertheless unlikely to abandon all their work with respect to the European Union. They will, for example, still need to monitor EU legislation and how it impacts on their policy responsibilities. There will still be some structural funding available to Scotland in the post-2006 period. In addition, there are policy disagreements between local authorities and the Scottish Executive. These disagreements may encourage local governments to maintain an independent capacity to engage in European Union policy-making.

This article examines the current status of Scottish local government engagement in European Union activities and evaluates the future of this engagement. The analysis is based on a written survey of Scottish local government officials carried out in 2003, as well as an analysis of secondary sources. The survey, and consequently the article, did not seek to assess whether Scottish local authorities are capable of actually exerting influence over European Union policy-making (Jeffery, 2000). Rather the scope of the survey was restricted to examining local government interest in the EU by measuring the resources that they devote to this activity and assessing expectations regarding its future development.

The scale of the survey is small given that 19 responses were received, from a total of 32 local councils, and the results must be treated with caution. Nevertheless, the survey provides an indication of the current level of local government activity with respect to the EU, the possible evolution of this activity, and the factors that influence it.

Factors influencing Scottish local government engagement in the European Union

Local governments did not participate in the founding treaties or the initial policy-making processes, but are now very much interested in the operation and outputs of EU policy-making, and have engaged both formally and informally in the policy-making process (Goldsmith and Klausen, 1997a; John, 2000). Local authorities from virtually all member states have, for example, opened offices in Brussels to monitor policy-making and perhaps influence policy outcomes (Marks et al, 2002). As local governments have developed means of lobbying the European Union institutions they have also been included more formally within the EU's policy-making processes. This is evident in the establishment of the Committee of the Regions (Jeffery, 2002a).

While local government attempts to engage in European Union policy-making are evident in almost all member states, the extent of this engagement varies on a number of

levels (Goldsmith and Klausen, 1997a). First, local authorities are more active in some policy sectors than others, and so have been highly visible in some policy sectors, such as regional policy, and almost completely absent in others, such as foreign and defence policy (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). Second, detailed studies indicate that local and regional government participation varies widely across member states and also within individual member states (Goldsmith and Klausen, 1997a; John, 2000). As Goldsmith and Klausen state, "regardless of which country one examines, one can find regional and local governments who do little vis-à-vis Europe as well as others who have been at the forefront of European activity" (1997b: 239). Similarly, Peter John argues that some local governments are "fully Europeanised" (with the EU being central to their work), whereas others are only minimally involved with the EU (1994a).

Variation in local government engagement with the European Union was evident with respect to Scottish local authorities in the period prior to devolution in 1999 (see John, 1996; Mazey and Mitchell, 1993; McAteer and Mitchell, 1996; Sutcliffe, 1997). Some local governments demonstrated little interest in the European Union and possessed limited resources to be active at that level. Others were engaged to a much higher degree and sought to develop a capacity to participate in European Union policy-making. As with local authorities in other member states, a number of factors have been posited to explain variations in local authority interest and activity in the European Union. These can be divided into domestic and European factors. They are, however, interrelated.

Domestic factors

Policy responsibility

Policy responsibility helps to explain local government interest in the European Union (see John, 2000; Marks et al, 2002). Local authorities have become interested in the

European Union to the extent that decisions taken at that level affect their domestic responsibilities. In addition, local authorities have often been the level of government that implements EU policy decisions (although ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance lies with the member state government). Scottish local government has thus seen an increasing amount of its policy activity influenced, if to varying degrees, by decision-making in Europe as the extent of policy activity in the EU has also increased (see Pollack, 2000, and below). This has been evident in some of the major policy areas falling within the remit of Scottish local government including local transportation, housing, economic planning, and education. In the case of environmental policy, for example, a number of Scottish local authorities indicate that European Union regulations and directives profoundly influence their recycling and waste management policies. Aberdeenshire Council, for example, states that they need to "take the necessary steps to improve waste reduction, re-use and recovery in order to comply with the various targets introduced by European legislation…" (Aberdeenshire Council, 2004).

EU regulations have also affected local government's internal working practices. Local authorities thus have to respect EU regulations in the field of employment equity as well as those that affect the contracts tendered by local authorities. This overlap between EU decision-making and local authority policy responsibilities has provided an incentive for these authorities to monitor EU legislative activities.

Local authority size

Demographic size is a second factor used to explain the extent of a local government's interest in the European Union. It has thus been suggested that larger local governments have been more likely to establish independent offices in Brussels (see Bache and Jones, 2000; Marks et al, 2002). Similarly, Peter John notes that it has often been larger regional and local authorities that have sought to integrate themselves more fully into European

policy-making (2000). At least two factors help to explain this relationship between local government size and interest in the European Union. First, larger authorities often have greater policy responsibilities and this results in them being more directly affected by European Union decisions (as examined above). Second, larger local authorities frequently, although by no means always, have access to more financial resources with which to become active at the European level.

Both of these factors were evident in the Scottish situation prior to 1996 when a two-tier local government structure existed. Under this structure an upper-tier of nine regional councils had responsibility for such policies as economic planning, transportation, and education while smaller district councils took responsibility for more limited policies such as leisure services (Sutcliffe, 1997). A study by Martin and Pearce found that the larger Scottish regional councils were confident of their capacity to engage in European Union policy-making even if this focused mainly on securing policy information (1999: 47). The regional councils engaged in a range of activities including participation in networks of local and regional actors, independent and multilateral lobbying of the EU institutions (particularly the Commission), the establishment of in-house European officers and information departments, and the opening of offices in Brussels (Mazey and Mitchell, 1993; McAteer and Mitchell, 1996). With respect to these activities, the former Strathclyde Regional Council, for example, organised early to participate in the European Union and enjoyed some success in this regard (Goldsmith and Sperling, 1997; John, 1994b; Jones, 1992; Goldsmith, 2003: 123).

The structure of Scottish local government was amended in 1996 when the central government introduced a single-tier structure of 32 unitary authorities, which assumed responsibility for the functions previously undertaken by the regional and district councils. In spite of this reform, there continues to be variation in local government size within Scotland. The smallest council, Orkney Islands Council, covers a population of

approximately 20,000 while the largest, Glasgow City Council, has responsibility for approximately 600,000 people.[1]

Central-local relationships

The relationship between local authorities and their central government is a third domestic factor used to explain local government engagement with the European Union. Specifically, it has been suggested that in situations where poor working relationships between the central government and regional or local governments exist, the latter may be tempted to 'by-pass' the former and develop an independent relationship with the European Union's institutions (Hooghe and Marks, 2001: 87). Many studies emphasise the extent of the strained relations between local authorities and the UK government prior to 1997 (see, for example, Midwinter, 1995; John, 1996). To a considerable degree, this was a political conflict between a Conservative central government and a Scottish electorate that voted overwhelmingly for non-Conservative parties at the UK and local levels. In this confrontational political environment the view existed that a Conservative Scottish Office was incapable of effectively representing Scotland, and this extended to local authorities' attitudes with respect to the Scottish Office and the European Union. This should not, however, be exaggerated. Scottish local authorities could, and often did, work closely with the Scottish Office with respect to the European Union (van den Hoven and Sutcliffe, 2003). Nevertheless, the notion of local authorities seeking to 'by-pass' the central government by developing an independent capacity to engage in European Union policy-making did exist (see John, 1996: 135). At least part of the reason why local governments devoted resources to the European Union was the perception that their interests differed from those of the UK government in this area, and that the Scottish Office was incapable of representing their interests.

European factors

Alongside these domestic factors, there are at least three European Union-level forces that help to explain variation in local government interest in EU policy-making.

European Union policy remit

As noted above, local authorities are affected by decisions taken at the European Union level when those decisions affect their policy responsibilities. The extent of their interest therefore depends upon their domestic policy responsibilities, the European Union's policy competencies, and the overlap between the two. The range of decisions taken in whole or in part at the EU level has expanded considerably through the course of the EU's history (see Pollack, 2000; Wallace, 2000). Over time, therefore, Scottish local authorities have had to pay increasing attention to policy activities at the European level. This is evident, for example, in the area of waste management mentioned above. Environmental policy was not part of the original European treaties. As a result of a combination of pressures, however, including the accession of new member states with high levels of environmental protection, environmental policy has been increasingly part of EU jurisdiction from the Single European Act onwards (see Sbragia, 2000). As a result, local authorities are now affected by EU decisions in this area.

The development of the single European market is a related issue. As this market has developed local authorities have created resources to help local businesses operate in the new economic conditions. In the case of Scotland, local authorities in partnership with quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations (such as Scottish Enterprise) as well as the more senior level of government, have established almost 50 Business Gateway facilities across Scotland. One aspect of these facilities is the provision of information on conducting business in the European Union market place (Business Gateway, 2004).

The structural funds

The structural funds are a second European-level factor encouraging local government interest in the European Union (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). In spite of doubts about whether the structural funds actually provide local and regional governments with extra money for regional development (see Bache and Bristow, 2003; Bache, 1998), there is no question that local and regional authorities have been affected by the growing size of the structural fund budget. Scottish local authorities have also been active in lobbying for and assisting with the implementation of EU structural fund programmes (Sutcliffe, 2002). Indeed, significant sums of money were secured for Scottish regions and local authority areas. One of the most notable was the Highlands and Islands Objective 1 programme and the follow-up transitional programme. Through the 2000-06 period, Scotland will receive £1094 million from the structural fund budget (Scottish Parliament European Committee, 2002a). It would be inaccurate to conclude from this, however, that Scottish local authorities have been capable of influencing decision-making with respect to structural fund spending decisions. There is a range of factors that helps to explain why a region is awarded a structural fund programme (see Greenwood et al, 1995; Sutcliffe, 2002). Local government lobbying is only one element of the decision-making process, and not necessarily the most significant. Nevertheless, it is the case that Scottish local authorities, to varying degrees, have come to rely on money secured through procedures established at the European level. The expenditure of this money also requires that local authorities follow European rules in a partnership with the central government and the European Commission (see Bache et al, 1996; Bryden, 1997; Sutcliffe, 2002).

The European Commission

The European Commission is a third force that has pulled local authorities to engage in European Union policy making (Goldsmith, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Tömmel,

1998). Different parts of the Commission have found it useful to use subnational actors as sources of information to facilitate the development of policy proposals. This information source is particularly significant given the small size of the Commission and the fact that subnational actors are often the authorities that ultimately implement EU regulations and policies (European Commission, 2003). Thus, the Commission has welcomed the participation of regional and local authorities in the EU's policy-making process. This is, in part, demonstrated by the Commission's support for the formation of the Committee of the Regions.

In sum, then, a combination of internal local authority decisions, national government decisions, and EU-level decisions have conditioned Scottish local governments' interaction with the European Union. Scottish local governments are now in a transitional period, which will have a possible impact on their EU activity. The significant change in their constitutional structure following devolution, combined with changes at the European level, are encouraging these governments to review their EU activities. They at least raise the possibility of reduced local government activity in this area.

Domestic changes affecting local government engagement in the European Union

The establishment of the Scottish Parliament and Executive in 1998 has important consequences for local government. Responsibility for local government has been devolved and Scottish local authorities must now deal extensively with the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive, rather than the UK central government (Bennett et al, 2002; Jeffery, 2002b; Mitchell, 1999). Most, though not all, of local government's work is now conditioned by decisions taken in Edinburgh. This change potentially has important consequences for Scottish local government's place within the European Union. There exists at least the possibility that devolution will result in a reduced local

government commitment to European Union activities, with such activities moving to the Scottish level.

The Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament have a complicated relationship with respect to EU policy-making. The Scottish Executive does not have a seat in the Council of Ministers, or the capacity to nominate a member of the European Commission. In addition, the Scotland Act states that the Scottish Parliament cannot pass laws that clash with existing EU legislation and that the UK Government must ensure that EU legislation is properly implemented in Scotland. UK ministers have the power to intervene in Scotland to ensure that EU obligations are implemented (Scottish Executive, 1999a: 2). The Scotland Act, and subsequent agreements, however, recognise that the European Union impinges on the work of the Scottish Parliament and Executive in a number of ways (see Sloat, 2002). The Parliament and Executive must be aware of existing and proposed EU policy in order to ensure that proposed Scottish legislation does not contravene EC law. They also monitor proposed EU policy that impinges on devolved areas because they are responsible for implementing that policy in Scotland. They must also be aware of all EU policy, in devolved or non-devolved areas, that has the potential to affect Scottish interests. For these reasons, the Scottish Parliament and Executive monitor closely developments within the EU (Bulmer and Burch, 2002; Sloat, 2002).

In addition to monitoring the EU institutions, provision has also been made to try and ensure that the Scottish Parliament and Executive have a voice in the development of UK policy with respect to EU negotiations. The primary means of achieving this was a *Memorandum of Understanding* along with supplementary concordats, including one on the European Union (Scottish Executive, 1999a; 1999b).[2] These are not legally binding, but set out the principles and working practices underlying relations between the Scottish Executive (and Welsh Executive), and the UK Government. The general underlying

principle is that there should be good and timely communication between the devolved administrations and the UK Government in order "to allow administrations to make representations to each other in sufficient time for those representations to be fully considered" (Scottish Executive, 1999a: 2; see also Bulmer and Burch, 2002).

Finally, the Scottish Executive implements, or oversees implementation of, EU decisions related to devolved issue areas. The memorandum and supplementary agreements indicate that the Scottish Executive takes these implementation decisions following discussions with the relevant UK Government departments because, as noted above, the UK Government is ultimately responsible for ensuring that EU laws are fully implemented throughout the UK. In the case of EU legislation affecting non-devolved issues, UK Government departments "liaise closely" with the Scottish Executive, particularly where implementing legislation "could touch on areas which fall within the responsibility of the devolved administrations" (Scottish Executive, 1999a: B3.16).

There are, then, a number of reasons why the Scottish Parliament and Executive seek to engage in European Union policy-making, and a number of mechanisms that exist to allow for such an engagement. As a result there is a greater capacity for a common Scottish voice to develop in an attempt to influence EU policy making. In the words of Michael Keating: "The Scottish Parliament, in an EU context, will not content itself with the role of subordinate government. Scotland will join those stateless nations and strong regions looking for a special place in the European Union" (1998: 233). The late First Minister, Donald Dewar, made reference to the development of a single Scottish voice when he opened the Scottish Executive's office in Brussels: "I am confident that Scotland will become a more visible and more effective regional player in the European stage. We are in the business of preparing the ground for this higher profile in Europe" (Scottish Office, 1999). More recently, a Scottish Parliament European Committee Report echoed this view when it examined the possibility of developing a 'Team Scotland' approach to

"ensure that a common and co-ordinated voice or policy position is represented within the EU" (Scottish Parliament European Committee, 2002b: pt. 32).

It is, therefore, possible that there might be pressure for local governments to leave EU activity to the Scottish level. Devolution has reduced (though not removed) the level of conflict between local authorities and the Scottish-level government. One of the rationales for devolution was to bring decision-making closer to the Scottish people by placing authority in the hands of politicians who more accurately reflected the political preferences of Scottish voters (Mitchell, 1999; Paterson, 1998: 58). One consequence of this has been a closer political alignment between local government and the Scottish-level administration since 1999. The 2003 Scottish and local election results provide the most recent evidence of this. Labour remains the major party at both the Scottish and local levels.

In this context, there is less incentive for local authorities to pursue an independent European Union agenda for political reasons. Local authorities and the Scottish Executive do not always have identical interests (a fact noted by the Scottish Parliament European Committee, 2002b). Nevertheless, it is already evident that their working relationship is closer and stronger than was the earlier local government-Scottish Office relationship (see Bennett et al, 2002; Jeffery, 2002b). A survey of local government, for example, found the widespread perception that:

> [D]evolution had significantly improved matters by bringing national government closer, geographically to local government. Devolution meant that ministers, and other MSPs, could be more easily contacted and they could more easily find the time to visit local authorities and listen to the issues of concern to them (Bennett et al, 2002: 43).

The same report suggested that at least one reason for the better relationship was the political ties that existed between local authorities and the Scottish Executive and Parliament.

This closer relationship raises the possibility of local authorities being prepared to leave European Union activities to the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament. This possibility is further enhanced given that local authorities are still financially constrained. Although financing of local government has improved since the pre-devolution period, local authorities still face difficult budgetary decisions. Money spent on European officers, or on funding a regional information office in Brussels, is money that is unavailable for other purposes. In a political climate where local authorities must demonstrate to both their constituents and higher levels of government that they are providing value for money, the cost of European activities must be justified. Highlighting the quantity of structural funds awarded to the region in which the authority is located is the most straightforward way to demonstrate value for money. Academic studies suggest a more complicated causal relationship as it is difficult to demonstrate that local government activity has resulted in the awarding of EU structural funds (Greenwood et al, 1995). In any case, as will be examined below, EU enlargement will likely reduce the amount of money available to Scotland through the structural funds, and thus limit local authorities' ability to use these funds as evidence of successful EU engagement. In the other aspects of local governments' EU activity it is even harder to demonstrate practical achievements, as it is exceptionally difficult to pinpoint local influence on EU legislation. Monitoring the EU legislative process is important, but may be of little practical concern to local residents compared to issues such as housing, service provision, and local taxation. The majority of the public does not associate European Union activity with the mandate of a local government. As a result, justifying such activity is increasingly difficult for a local authority, especially as the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive seek to increase their presence in Europe.

It is important to note, however, that there is no guarantee that the Scottish Executive (or Scottish Parliament) will be the only Scottish 'voice' seeking to influence

EU policy. It is not necessarily the case that local governments will be prepared to leave the articulation of European concerns to the Scottish Executive or the Scottish Parliament. Glasgow City Council made this point in its contribution to the committee debate on Scottish representation in the EU (Scottish Parliament European Committee, 2002b: pt. 37). Although there is now a greater political compatibility between the Scottish level of government and local authorities, this compatibility does not guarantee a perfectly harmonious relationship. A number of authorities, for example, are controlled by political groupings that differ from that of the Scottish Executive. Among these authorities there is a greater degree of suspicion of the Executive (see Bennett et al, 2002: 15-6). It is also the case that a perception exists within some local authorities that the interests of the Scottish central belt may dominate Scottish Executive decision-making (interviews with author). Finally, one survey of local government attitudes towards the Scottish Executive found evidence that while relations with the political Executive were generally open, and closer than had been the case with the Scottish Office, local government relations with the civil service were not as close (Bennett et al, 2002: 17). A majority of local government respondents to this survey suggested that the civil service was, "largely dismissive of local government and on some issues even hostile to it" (Bennett et al, 2002: 15-6).

Thus, there is no guarantee of a compatibility of interests between all local authorities and the views expressed by the Scottish Executive (see Scottish Parliament European Committee, 2002b). The potential for division has been particularly evident in the debate over the introduction of proportional representation for local government elections. Some local councillors (particularly Labour councillors) are highly critical of Executive plans in this direction. It is thus inaccurate to argue that devolution has removed all causes of tension between local government and the upper level of government. It has therefore not completely removed one of the reasons why local

governments seek to engage in the European Union: the existence of distinct interests that are not represented by senior governments.

European changes affecting local government engagement in the European Union

Just as the domestic context within which Scottish local government operates is changing, so too is the European context. This change may weaken the extent to which developments and activities at the EU level draw local authorities to engage in European Union policy-making. There are two main EU developments that may reduce this pull effect for Scottish local government.

The structural funds have always been critical to local governments' interest in the European Union (Marks, 1993; Hooghe and Marks, 2001). While there have been controversies about the extent of the benefits that the structural funds provide (see McAleavey, 1995), local governments have been active in trying to lobby for structural fund programmes for their areas (van den Hoven and Sutcliffe, 2003). For many authorities, this has been a primary reason for the employment of European officers as well as the establishment of offices in Brussels. In addition, as noted above, the securing of funds has often been used as the main justification for local expenditure on EU activity.

The current round of structural fund programmes ends in 2006, and negotiations are underway for the new programming period. The next period will occur in a different context from earlier periods. In particular, the new structural funds will be negotiated within a European Union that contains 25 member states as compared to the 15 that negotiated the current programming period. The new member states, moreover, are predominantly poorer than the existing member states and have regions with GDPs far below those of even the weakest Scottish regions. As a result, the new member states will be entitled to make substantial claims on the structural funds. In the absence of a

commitment to increase substantially the size of the structural funds, something that is unlikely (see Pollack, 2000), the claims of the new states will only be met at the expense of the existing member states. One potential alternative to a shift in the targeting of the funds in favour of the east European states is a reorganisation of the whole policy sector. This debate already involves a discussion about the possibility of renationalising the structural funds; that is, moving entire responsibility for regional development back to the member states (see Scottish Parliament European Committee, 2002a). In this eventuality, a major rationale for local authorities' engagement with the European Union will disappear.

Even in the absence of such a dramatic reform, one result of enlargement is that Scotland (and thus Scottish local government) will be eligible for a reduced quantity of structural funds in the post-2006 programming period (see Scottish Parliament European Committee, 2002a). Scotland will not, however, be completely ineligible for the structural funds after 2006. Eligibility for the structural funds is at least partly the product of national bargaining (Pollack, 1995). In the past, resources have been committed to member states for a variety of reasons not necessarily restricted to development needs. The 1993 decision on the award of Objective 1 status, for example, occurred in an intergovernmental setting where each of the national delegations demanded, and received, some level of support for their state. Scottish regions will still require regional development assistance following EU enlargement. As noted by Michel Barnier, the Commissioner with responsibility for regional policy, "just because countries like Poland, Estonia or Hungary come into the union, problems in Scotland or Andalusia will not disappear miraculously. The union needs to address these problems also" (quoted in Scottish Parliament European Committee, 2002a: pt. 29). The existing member states, in any case, will not allow the entire structural fund budget to be diverted to the new member states. Scotland will continue to receive a share of the structural fund budget and

local authorities will thus have cause to continue lobbying for a share of this budget. Indeed, Scottish authorities are already engaged in an attempt to influence the terms of the structural fund regulations after 2006. Local authorities in the north of Scotland, for example, are keen to have a commitment to the development of mountainous and sparsely populated regions included as part of the new structural fund regulations (interviews with author).

A second change within the European Union that may affect Scottish local authorities concerns the EU policy-making process. The Commission will continue to consult with regional and local governments, both directly and through the Committee of the Regions, as part of the policy formation process in the European Union.[3] The role of Scottish local government in this consultative network, however, may be reduced due to changes within the European Union combined with the domestic developments examined above. First, the Commission has always preferred to encourage actors from similar constituencies to develop a single voice in policy debates. This is evident in the regional policy sector, for example, where the Commission encourages local and regional actors to develop networks (McAleavey and Mitchell, 1994). This desire to reduce the number of participants in the policy debate is likely to increase now that the European Union is geographically larger and the range of interested policy participants greater. Given the small size of the Commission, and the complexity of developing policy initiatives for the European Union as a whole, it will be increasingly important for the Commission to limit the number of participants in the policy debate, while still retaining access to the information it needs to develop effective policy proposals.

In the case of Scotland, the Commission is likely to favour the development of one Scottish voice rather than have separate local authorities trying to enter the policy debate. This has been evident in the on-going debate about the future of European Union decision-making. In the first place, this debate revolved around the Commission's *White*

Paper on European Governance, which was published in July 2001 as the start of a consultation process (European Commission, 2001). The white paper called for a more 'systematic dialogue' with subnational governments, as well as making a commitment to use the practical experience of this level of government when undertaking its own policy responsibilities (European Commission, 2001). To further this aim, the Commission produced a communication on a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue (European Commission, 2002), and committed to setting up a dialogue with regional and local authorities (European Commission, 2003). In both cases the calls for a greater role for regional and local authorities in European Union policy-making referred to them at the aggregate level in the shape of the national and European associations of subnational authorities. In the words of the Commission:

> After enlargement, the European Union will comprise some 250 regions and 100 000 local authorities. These authorities are organised in various national and European associations. The Commission wishes to organise a dialogue with the associations that are representative and are capable of presenting opinions that have been developed collectively (European Commission, 2003: 1).

These calls for greater regional and local involvement at the aggregate level combine with devolution in Scotland to suggest that if there is going to be a larger place for a regional or local dimension in the European Union, it will be at the Scottish level rather than at the individual local authority level. It is certainly the case that the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive's response to the debate about the future of the EU has been to emphasise the role that should be played by the newly devolved Scottish institutions. The Scottish Executive's response to the Commission's white paper on governance states that:

> the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament, together with other stakeholders in Scotland who would be brought in by the Executive as appropriate, should have the opportunity to comment directly at the consultative stage. This is because the obligation to implement EU law

and the power to legislate in order to do so has now been devolved to the Scottish Parliament (Scottish Executive, 2002: 3).

The Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive emphasise that the European Union needs to include a privileged place for regions and sub-member state nations with legislative powers. The Scottish Parliament European Committee's report on the future of the European Union called for new rights within the EU for regions and nations. This included demanding a "new Council formation – the Regional Affairs Council – consisting of ministers from 'regions' with legislative powers" (Scottish Parliament European Committee, 2002c: pt.89). The report also argues that, "sub-member state nations and regions with legislative power, such as Scotland, need to be explicitly recognised within the EU's treaties and its working practices" (Scottish Parliament European Committee, 2002c: pt. 62). The Scottish Executive agrees that the Commission must be required to consult with regions with devolved legislative powers (Scottish Executive, 2003).

The views expressed by the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament are part of a wider European lobby formed by regions with legislative power. In November 2002, this network issued a resolution as a contribution to the Convention on the Future of Europe, which began its work on 28 February 2002, and produced a draft constitutional treaty in June 2003, which helped to shape the treaty adopted by the member state governments in June 2004. This resolution stated that: "The European Union can only achieve its goals in terms of democracy, transparency, efficiency, flexibility, proximity, effectiveness and accountability if it provides more opportunities for the Regions with Legislative Power" (Regleg, 2002: 3). They therefore call for "the explicit recognition of the regional dimension – and specifically of the Regions with Legislative Power – in all relevant parts of the Treaty", and for special status within the EU (Regleg, 2002: 3).[4]

There is no guarantee that these demands will be adopted in any future treaty revision. Indeed, the constitutional treaty does not recommend the changes advocated by

regions with legislative power lobby (European Convention, 2003). The existence of the demands, however, provides evidence that the new Scottish institutions are seeking a role in the European Union. This is in line with the conclusion reached by Sloat that devolution will change the nature of Scottish participation in the EU, although without necessarily allowing Scotland to exert more influence on policy outcomes (Sloat, 2002: 194). According to Sloat, a majority of participants in the devolution process suggest that, "the Scottish Parliament will raise Scotland's profile, while the Executive can speak in Europe with democratic authority and liaise with other 'constitutional regions'" (2002: 194).

The debate about the future of the Europe Union, and the extent to which the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament wish to be involved in this debate, does not necessarily preclude a role for individual Scottish local authorities. The Commission, the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive, however, tend to envisage local authorities gaining access to the EU debate through the devolved institutions and the national local authority association (COSLA). The extent to which the individual local authorities are satisfied with this access will depend in part on the perceived effectiveness of the Scottish voice, and on how representative this Scottish voice is of the separate local authorities. As noted above, however, the current political climate suggests a greater compatibility between the local authorities and the devolved Scottish institutions than existed in the pre-devolution period.

The survey

In order to examine Scottish local government EU activities the individual officers, or local government departments, with responsibility for EU activity were identified and a survey mailed to them in 2003. 19 responses were received, representing just under two-thirds of all Scottish local authorities. The responses were broadly representative of all

Scottish local governments in terms of demographic size, geographic location, and political control. Thus, six responses came from small authorities (those covering a population of less than 100,000); seven came from medium-sized authorities (those with a population between 100-200,000); and six came from large authorities (those with a population of more than 200,000). In terms of geographic location, 13 responses came from authorities in the central belt of Scotland, and six came from authorities outside. Finally, in terms of political control, 11 responses were from authorities under Labour control; three were Independent; one was under Liberal-Democratic control, and four were controlled by different types of coalition.

The survey had three main aims. The first was to secure data about current local government European Union activities. To this end, those surveyed were asked to identify the local authority department or section with primary responsibility for European Union activities; the number of council employees working on European Union issues; what European issues the council is concerned with; whether the council receives funding from the structural funds; and finally whether the council has an office in Brussels.

The second aim was to determine whether local governments are reducing their engagement in European Union issues or whether they expect such a reduction in the future. To this end, those surveyed were asked whether the number of council employees working on EU issues had increased, decreased or remained the constant over the past five years. They were then asked whether they expected the European Union to become more significant to the local authority, less significant, or remain the same.

The third aim of the survey was to assess whether local authority EU activity can be explained by the variables examined earlier in the paper. The specific focus here is on the impact of devolution on this aspect of local authorities' work. Thus, respondents were asked about the relationship between their council and the Scottish Executive.

Respondents were asked to rank their contacts with the Executive from extensive to minimal. They were then asked to evaluate the extent to which the Scottish Executive takes local government views into account with respect to EU issues. Finally, respondents were asked whether their relationship with the Executive in this area was closer, weaker or the same as the previous relationship with the Scottish Office. The intention is to determine whether those respondents who identify a close relationship with the Scottish Executive are more likely to indicate that their council is reducing its commitment to European Union activities or that such activity will decline in significance.

Results of the survey

The number of employees working primarily on the EU varies from a low of one to a high of eight in the 19 councils that responded. The location of these employees also varies across the councils although the most common situation is for EU officers to be located either within the council's economic development department or within the corporate services department.

It is important to emphasise that the number of employees dealing specifically with European Union issues is not indicative of the totality of a council's involvement with the European Union. A number of responses highlight the fact that many council departments deal with the European Union. This was identified by the response from Fife Council which stated that while European issues were dealt with by three 'full-time equivalent' staff members, "a number of other Council services get involved in particular policy areas as they affect their area of work" (Sharon Douglas, Fife Council). A further response indicated that it was difficult to identify how many council staff work on EU issues since the "issues overlap and impact on the work of a range of Council services" (anon). The response from Stephen Chorley indicated that East Ayrshire Council has no EU 'specialist' within its staff but that EU policy is "part of the remit of several staff".

The fact that the European Union affects various aspects of the work of Scottish local councils is further evident in the responses to a question asking about the EU issues of concern to the council. 18 of the 19 responses to this question list the structural funds as one of the key activities for which they have responsibility. That the structural funds are a major issue for Scottish local authorities in their relationship with the European Union is further emphasised by the fact that all 19 councils receive some level of support from the structural fund budget. The responses, however, also suggest that there is a wide range of other EU activities which affects local authorities and in which they are interested. Thus, five responses refer to the importance of agricultural and fisheries policy; four to employment and state aids; nine to environmental policy; five to transportation; and six to general EU legislation that might affect the authority.

The final question aimed at gauging the current engagement of the Scottish local authorities with the European Union concerned whether the council has an office in Brussels. Reflecting the overall Scottish situation, all 19 councils responding have some presence in Brussels. In each case, however, this is limited. In the overwhelming majority of cases the office in Brussels is shared with other authorities and organizations. Thus, most of the local authorities have a link to Brussels through either the East of Scotland European Consortium, the Highlands and Islands European Partnership or the West of Scotland European Consortium. Each of these partnerships is housed within Scotland House[5] in Brussels and its primary purpose is to bring together local governments and organisations in regions eligible for the structural funds. Other authorities rely on the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) representative to act as an information source. Thus, while all authorities devote some resources to maintaining a direct or indirect presence in Brussels, this cannot be exaggerated. The East of Scotland European Consortium office, for example, does not have a permanent staff member. Instead, the office is used as a base for visits to Brussels, and information is secured

through the paid services of Scotland House. The offices funded by the Scottish councils certainly do not compare with the bigger offices maintained by the German Lander (Jeffery, 1996).

Having established a baseline of information regarding local government engagement in the European Union, the survey's second intention was to determine the stability of this engagement. To this end, respondents were asked whether the number of council employees engaged in European Union work has increased, reduced or remained static over the previous five-year period. They were then asked whether they expect the European Union to become more significant to the local authority, less significant or remain the same. In response to the first question, eight respondents indicate that the number of employees working on EU issues has increased over the past five years, six indicate that the number has remained the same, and only three indicate that it has declined. With respect to these numbers, it should be noted that the extent of the changes, either up or down, has not been great. Thus, in the majority of cases where there has been an increase or decrease, this rarely amounts to more than one position. It is also the case that qualifications were entered in each response indicating a reduction in staff numbers. In one of these cases the respondent notes that the loss of one position from the specialist EU staff is offset by the placement of a policy officer for the East of Scotland European Consortium in the council. In the two remaining cases, the respondents note that responsibility for dealing with the EU is not concentrated within one department but is handled by all council departments to varying degrees. As a result, the loss of a position does not necessarily indicate a reduction in the overall importance of the EU for the council. Instead, it may indicate that knowledge of, and responsibility for, EU work has become more widespread across council employees thus reducing the need for specialist staff.

Overall, then, the responses to this part of the survey do not suggest a significant downgrading of the EU's importance to the work of Scottish local government. This conclusion is also supported by the responses to the question regarding the future significance of the European Union. Respondents were asked whether they foresaw "the European Union becoming more or less significant for their authority or remaining the same". The overwhelming majority of responses suggest that the European Union will either remain as important as it currently is or will increase in importance. Ten responses suggest that the EU will become more important to their council, seven indicate that it will remain the same, and only two predict that the European Union will decline in importance.

Analysis

The survey indicates only limited variation across Scottish local government with respect to both the current importance of the European Union to local government and expectations about its future importance. This conclusion is confirmed by analysing the survey responses against some of the variables identified earlier in the paper as possible explanations of local government activity. First, the survey responses to the questions regarding changes in the number of employees working directly on EU issues and future expectations regarding the importance of the EU were analysed to determine whether they were influenced by the size of the local council [Tables 1 and 2 about here]. Table 1 provides the results for the relationship between the change in number of employees working on the EU and the population size of the authority, with the authorities divided into three categories; small (less than 100,000 people), medium (100,000-200,000) and large (more than 200,000). The results indicate identical result for the six small authorities and six medium-sized authorities. In both cases, two responses report an increase in the number of employees working on EU issues, three responses report that

the number has remained the same, and only one indicates a reduction in staff numbers. The responses from the large authorities were slightly different in that responses were more likely to report an increase in staff numbers. Thus, four of five responses (80 per cent) indicate an increase and only one response reports a reduction in staff numbers. These results, however, are not statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level (p=0.05).[6]

Local authority size also fails to explain responses to the question regarding expectations about the future importance of the European Union to local authorities. Table 2 does indicate that none of the six larger or seven medium-sized authorities responding to this question feel that the EU will decrease in importance for their authority. On the other hand, two of the six responses from smaller local authorities envisage such a scenario (the only two responses in the whole survey to suggest that the EU will become less important to their work). This finding cannot, however, be pressed too far. First, three of the six responses from smaller local authorities argue the opposite and envisage the European Union becoming more important to the council. Second, the results from Table 2 are not statistically significant. Thus, within the terms of this survey, local authority size does not help to explain local authority attitudes with respect to the European Union. It is the case that the larger authorities devote more resources to European Union activity, as measured in terms of number of employees working in this area. It is not the case, however, that larger authorities have been increasing the resources they devote to the European Union while those of smaller authorities have been decreasing, or that smaller authorities envisage EU activity declining in importance while larger or medium-sized authorities envisage the opposite. Instead, the results suggest a fairly stable commitment to the European Union across all local authorities regardless of size and a general expectation that the EU will either remain important or increase in importance.

A similar situation is evident when the results of the survey are examined with respect to the local authorities' domestic political context. As indicated above, one of the paper's aims is to examine the impact of devolution on local authorities' European Union activity. The intention is to explore the possibility that this activity is influenced by the existence of the Scottish Executive, and that a close political relationship between the two levels may encourage local authorities to leave EU activity to the Scottish Executive. To provide a baseline for this examination, the survey asked three questions relating to the relationship between local councils and the Scottish Executive. First, the survey asked respondents to rate their contacts with the Scottish Executive on EU issues. They were asked to indicate whether these contacts were extensive, fairly extensive, not very extensive, or minimal. Second, respondents were asked to compare their links with the Scottish Executive in this area with those of the Scottish Office prior to devolution. Respondents were asked whether the relationship with the Scottish Executive was closer, not as close, or about the same. Finally, respondents were asked whether the Scottish Executive takes account of local authority views closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly/not at all in developing positions with respect to EU issues.

The data from the survey indicate a fairly close relationship between local authorities and the Scottish Executive, and one that local authorities representatives' generally perceive to be closer than that with the Scottish Office. This conclusion supports the findings from other, more general, studies (see Bennett et al, 2002). Thus, only four responses suggest that relations with the Scottish Executive on EU issues are either not very extensive (two) or minimal (two). 15 of 19 total responses state that relations with the Scottish Executive are either extensive or fairly extensive on these issues. The majority of responses (12) indicate that relations are fairly extensive. When asked to compare the relationship with the Scottish Executive with that with the Scottish

Office, ten of the 18 responses suggest that it is closer, seven suggest that it is broadly similar and only one suggests that it is not as close.

Finally, the results are more mixed when respondents were asked whether the Scottish Executive actually takes account of local government views when developing EU policy positions. Only two respondents argue that the Scottish Executive takes close account of local authorities, ten suggest that it listens fairly closely, and five that it does not listen very closely. No respondents feel that the Scottish Executive takes no account of local authorities.

The raw numbers therefore indicate a generally positive attitude within local government with respect to the Scottish Executive in relation to the European Union. Analysing the survey responses to the questions regarding changes in the number of employees working directly on EU issues and future expectations regarding the importance of the EU in light of this positive attitude, however, does not indicate that local authorities are as yet willing to reduce their EU activities and leave them to the Scottish-level government. The incentive to engage directly at the EU level in order to by-pass a perceived to be hostile more senior level of government may have been reduced by devolution, but this has not had an impact on local authorities' EU activity. Thus, the survey responses demonstrate a positive attitude towards the Scottish Executive, but at the same time, as seen above, they indicate a general stability in the number of local authorities employees engaged in EU work as well as an expectation that the EU will remain as significant or become more significant to local authorities.

Tables 3, 4, and 5 examine the relationship between these numbers in more detail. Table 3 [about here] compares the respondents' evaluation of the extent of their contacts with the Scottish Executive with their responses when asked whether the number of employees working on EU issues has increased, decreased or remained the same over the past five years. Those authorities reporting extensive or fairly extensive contacts with the

Scottish Executive are not more likely to have seen a reduction in the number of employees working on EU issues than are authorities reporting not very extensive or minimal contacts with the Scottish Executive. The results do not indicate a relationship between these variables.

Table 4 [about here] evaluates the responses to the question of EU staff numbers in light of respondents' assessment of their relationship with the Scottish Executive as compared to the Scottish Office. As noted above, the overwhelming majority of respondents feel their relationship with the Scottish Executive is either as close as that with the Scottish Office or closer. Only one response suggests the relationship is not as close. Authorities reporting a closer relationship with the Scottish Executive than with the Scottish Office are not more likely to have seen a reduction in EU staff numbers. Thus, of the nine authorities that feel their relationship with the Scottish Executive is closer, six saw an increase in the number of employees engaged in EU activities, one reported the number remaining the same, and two reported a decrease. Of the seven authorities suggesting that their relationship with the Scottish Executive is similar to that with the Scottish Office, two reported an increase in staff numbers, four reported that the numbers had remained the same and only one reported a decrease. The statistics indicate that the relationship between these variables is not significant.

Table 5 [about here] examines the responses to the question of EU staff numbers in light of respondents' analysis of whether the Scottish Executive takes account of local authority views in developing EU positions. Again, the table demonstrates no statistically significant relationship between these variables. Authorities where respondents indicate that the Scottish Executive 'closely or fairly closely' listens to local authorities are more likely to have seen an increase in EU staff (four) than a decrease (three), with two reporting that the number of staff has remained the same.

The overall conclusion, therefore, is that devolution has not created a change in local authority work with respect to the European Union as measured by the number of staff employed on EU activities. Nor has it affected their expectations about the future importance of the EU to local government. Respondents' assessments of the future importance of the EU to their local authority were not affected by whether they perceived that they had a close relationship with the Scottish Executive, whether they felt the relationship with the Scottish Executive was closer than that with the Scottish Office, or whether they felt the Scottish Executive listens closely to local authorities [Tables 6 and 7 about here]. Table 6, for example, shows that 11 respondents feel that the Scottish Executive takes account 'closely or fairly closely' of local authority views with respect to the European Union. Only one of these 11 argues that the European Union may become less significant for the council. Of the remaining ten, five envisage the EU becoming more important and five see it remaining equally significant. On the other hand, the three respondents indicating that the Scottish Executive does not closely take account of local authority view are evenly split in their evaluation of the future importance of the EU for their council. One feels it will become less important, one more important and one that it will remain equally important. This does support the proposition that local authorities may be preparing to leave European Union activity to the Scottish Executive, even if there is a close relationship between the levels of government.

A similar conclusion is reached by examining the data in Table 7. The one respondent who indicates that council relations with the Scottish Executive are not as close as those with the Scottish Office does envisage the EU becoming more significant for the council. At the same time, however, 60 per cent of the respondents who indicate that the relationship with the Scottish Executive is closer also envisage the EU become more significant. Only one respondent who indicates that the relationship with the Scottish Executive is closer than that with the Scottish Office feels that the EU will

become less significant to the council. Again, the statistics do not indicate that respondents' expectations about the future importance of the European Union are influenced by their perceived relationship with the Scottish Executive. By these measures, local government officials do not perceive that their work on European Union activities will be reduced as a result of a close working relationship with the Scottish Executive.

Further confirmation of this comes by analysing the survey responses based on the political control of the local authorities [Tables 8 and 9 about here]. The results from Table 8 indicate that the political control of a local authority does not help to determine whether the number of local council employees working on EU issues has increased, decreased, or remained the same. Labour-controlled councils are not more likely to have reduced the number of staff working on EU issues. Nor are they more likely to indicate that they expect the European Union to decrease in importance [see Table 9]. The political compatibility between these local councils and the Scottish Executive does not seem to be encouraging these councils to reduce their commitment to EU activities or to expect the European Union to become less important in the future.

The preceding analysis therefore suggests that domestic factors have not had a dramatic impact on local government European Union activity. A second focus of analysis, as identified earlier, is to examine the impact of EU forces pulling local authorities to become engaged in the European Union. In particular, one possibility is that a reduction in the structural fund money available to Scotland may lead local authorities to scale back their European Union activities. The results of the survey indicate that the structural funds are a significant element in Scottish local authorities' thinking about the European Union. All 19 of the responding councils currently receive some level of funding from the structural funds. Moreover, 18 of the 19 respondents list the structural funds as one of the key activities for which they have responsibility and 12 of the

responses place the structural funds first on this list of activities. At the very least, this suggests that the structural funds are currently a major concern for Scottish local authorities. The responses also demonstrate that these authorities are aware of the possible loss of structural funding in the next budgetary period. Having asked about their expectations about the future importance of the European Union for their council, the survey asked respondents to comment on the reasons for their answer. The two responses indicating an expectation that the EU will decline in importance both offer declining eligibility for the structural funds as a reason. Three other responses also comment that their council will probably see a decline in structural fund eligibility and that this will have an impact on their EU work.

The overall survey results, however, do not indicate that local councils are reducing their commitment to the European Union because of expected reductions in structural fund eligibility. As identified earlier, only three responses report that their council has reduced the number of staff working on European issues, as compared to 14 who note that the number has remained constant or increased. At the same time, 17 of 19 responses suggest that the EU will either increase in importance for their local government or remain equally important. It may of course be the case that the impact of a reduction in the structural funds will not be noticeable until after the 2006 EU budget decisions have been made. Local councils can still expect Scotland to receive some structural funding and councils have an interest in lobbying for a share of this budget as well as lobbying to set the terms for its eventual distribution.

Alongside the structural funds, a major factor pulling the local councils to the EU is the extent to which they are affected by decisions taken at the EU level (see Goldsmith, 2003: 127). The results of this survey indicate that the responsibility for implementing EU legislation, and the extent to which decisions taken at the EU level affect local government, is one of the main factors behind continued local government interest in the

European Union. This is reflected in three elements of the survey, two of which have been mentioned previously. First, a number of responses note that many local government departments are influenced by the European Union and need to monitor the EU decision-making process. This is indicative of the fact that the European Union touches on a large number of local government activities and is not only confined to a local government desire for structural funds. This is further emphasised by the responses to the question asking respondents to list the European activities for which they have responsibility. As noted above, the structural funds featured prominently on respondents' lists, but were by no means the only EU policy area mentioned by respondents. Activities mentioned as important to local governments include environmental policy, transportation policy, employment policies, and interregional connections. In total, while 18 of 19 responses list the structural funds are important to their local authority, a further 18 responses also mention other policy areas.

Respondents also emphasise the importance of policy development and implementation in areas other than the structural funds when asked to explain their opinions about the future importance of the European Union to Scottish local government. As already noted, nine respondents predict that the EU will become more significant for local government, eight indicate that it will remain equally important, and two predict that it will decline in importance. The most common explanation given for the continued or increased importance of the European Union is the impact of EU legislation on local government. Jane Fowler, the European Manager for Argyll and Bute Council, commented that: "A significant amount of local government activity is directly influenced by EU decisions. This is likely to increase".

Overall, nine respondents expect Scottish local authorities will receive less support from the structural funds after 2006. Of these nine, however, only two expect the EU to decline in importance overall. The remainder suggest that a decline in EU financial

opportunities will be balanced by either increased or continued EU importance in other legislative areas. As one respondent put it, "we know that funding will be reduced as a result of enlargement, but other policy areas and legislation may become more important" (anon.). Similarly, Linda Aird, European Officer for North Ayrshire Council, notes that: "With the enlargement of the EU, it is likely that we will receive less direct funding from Brussels…However, the great majority of regulations which Scottish local authorities work to, or must enforce, now derive from Brussels". Even one of the responses that suggests the EU will decline in importance qualifies this by pointing to the importance of EU policy decisions to the local authority. "It is likely that, with enlargement, the Highlands and Islands will lose eligibility for the structural funds. This will remove the main area of interest. But on the other hand, as the EU expands its areas of competency, we will be more and more affected" (anon.). Overall, then, the responses indicate an expectation that policy-making in the European Union, as it affects Scottish local government, will continue to pull these local authorities to engage with the European Union.

Conclusion

The overall conclusion reached from this research is that there is a general uniformity in Scottish local authorities' approach to the European Union notwithstanding the fact that larger authorities devote more resources to EU activity than the smaller councils. It is also the case that these authorities are not visibly reducing the resources they commit to European Union activities.

Devolution has changed the domestic context for local government EU activity. The establishment of the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive increases the pressure for the development of a Scottish-level approach to the European Union. The generally good working relations between local authorities and the Scottish Executive

also reduces the incentive for local authorities to feel they must 'by-pass' the more senior government in developing an approach to the EU. The survey conducted here does not however indicate that local authorities are reducing their EU work as a result of these factors. At most, the survey responses indicate that local authorities see themselves working alongside the Scottish Executive with respect to EU issues. They do not indicate that local authorities expect to see EU work being left to the Scottish Executive.

The survey also indicates that Scottish local government officials are aware that their authorities are more than likely to see a change in their structural fund eligibility in the post-2006 period that will result in reduced financial awards to Scotland. Again, however, the survey responses do not indicate that this change will necessarily result in a reduction in local authorities' European Union work. It does not appear that the local authorities are only interested in the EU because of the desire to secure money.

Neither the domestic political context nor the desire to secure funding are the main factors affecting Scottish local authorities' engagement with the European Union. Instead, the key element is the overlap between local authority competences and those of the European Union, and the appreciation that the European Union affects significant aspects of local authority work. An awareness of the importance of European Union decision-making to local government permeates all the local authorities surveyed here. The survey responses also indicate a general expectation that EU work will remain important to the local authorities even if the Scottish Executive continues to emphasise its own role in European Union policy-making, and even if the Scottish share of the structural funds is reduced.

Notes

[1] In total eight of Scotland's 32 local councils can be classified as large, that is, having a population of over 200,000; 12 have a population of between 100,000 and 200,000 and 12 have a population of less than 100,000.

[2] The *Memorandum of Understanding* was published simultaneously in Cardiff, Edinburgh and London on 1 October 1999. In the following months, 17 bilateral concordats between the Scottish Executive and individual UK Government departments were published.

[3] Even if Andrew Moravcsik's argument that the European Union has reached the limit of its policy task expansion (2001) is accepted, it is still the case that the Commission will have an active part in managing the policies in which the EU currently has a role. The Commission will, therefore, continue to require information about the potential and actual consequences of policies.

[4] See also the Political Declaration by the constitutional regions of Bavaria, Catalonia, Flanders, North Rhine Westphalia, Salzburg, Scotland and Wallonia of 28 May 2001.

[5] Scotland House was opened in Brussels in 1999. It houses a number of Scottish actors' representatives, including that of the Scottish Executive.

[6] This is the confidence level used to determine significance in each of the tables.

Table 1: Employees and Population Size

Number of Employees	Small Population size (<100,000)		Medium Population Size (100,000–200,000)		Large Population Size (>200,000)		Total	
Increased	2	33.3%	2	33.3%	4	80.0%	8	47.1%
Stayed the Same	3	50.0%	3	50.0%	0	0.0%	6	35.3%
Decreased	1	16.7%	1	16.7%	1	20.0%	3	17.6%
Total	6	100.0%	6	100.0%	5	100.0%	17	100.0%

$x^2 = 4.156$ df: 4 $p = 0.385$ $n = 17$

Table 2: Future Importance of EU and Population Size

Importance of EU	Small Population size (<100,000)		Medium Population Size (100,000-200,000)		Large Population Size (>200,000)		Total	
More Important	3	50.0%	3	42.9%	4	66.7%	10	52.6%
Stay the Same	1	16.7%	4	57.1%	2	33.3%	7	36.8%
Less Important	2	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	10.5%
Total	6	100.0%	7	100.0%	6	100.0%	19	100.0%

$x^2 = 6.159$ df: 4 $p = 0.188$ $n = 19$

Table 3: Employees and Contacts with the Scottish Executive

Number of Employees	Extensive & Fairly Extensive		Not Very Extensive & Minimal		Total	
Increased	6	46.2%	2	50.0%	8	47.1%
Stayed the Same	5	38.5%	1	25.0%	6	35.3%
Decreased	2	15.4%	1	25.0%	3	17.6%
Total	13	100.0%	4	100.0%	17	100.0%

$x^2 = 0.327$ df: 2 $p = 0.849$ n = 17

Table 4: Employees and Relationship to the Scottish Executive

Number of Employees	Relationship is Closer		Relationship is About the Same		Relationship is Not As Close		Total	
Increased	6	66.7%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%	8	47.1%
Stayed the Same	1	11.1%	4	57.1%	1	100.0%	6	35.3%
Decreased	2	22.2%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	3	17.6%
Total	9	100.0%	7	100.0%	1	100.0%	17	100.0%

$x^2 = 5.667$ df: 4 $p = 0.225$ n = 17

Table 5: Employees and Scottish Executive taking into account the views of local authorities

Number of Employees	Views are taken into account Closely & Fairly Closely		Views are taken into account Not Very Closely & Hardly/Not At All		Total	
Increased	4	44.4%	0	0.0%	4	33.3%
Stayed the Same	2	22.2%	3	100.0%	5	41.7%
Decreased	3	33.3%	0	0.0%	3	25.0%
Total	9	100.0%	3	100.0%	12	100.0%

$x^2 = 5.600$ df: 2   p = 0.061   n = 12

Table 6: Future Importance of EU and Scottish Executive taking into account the views of local authorities

Importance of EU	Views are taken into account Closely & Fairly Closely		Views are taken into account Not Very Closely & Hardly/Not At All		Total	
More Important	5	45.5%	1	33.3%	6	42.9%
Stay the Same	5	45.5%	1	33.3%	6	42.9%
Less Important	1	9.1%	1	33.3%	2	14.3%
Total	11	100.0%	3	100.0%	14	100.0%

$x^2 = 1.131$ df: 2   p = 0.568   n = 14

Table 7: Future Importance of EU and Relationship to the Scottish Executive

Importance of EU	Relationship to the Scottish Executive is Closer		Relationship to the Scottish Executive is About the Same		Relationship to the Scottish Executive is Not As Close		Total	
More Important	6	60.0%	2	28.6%	1	100.0%	9	50.0%
Stay the Same	3	30.0%	4	57.1%	0	0.0%	7	38.9%
Less Important	1	10.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	2	11.1%
Total	10	100.0%	7	100.0%	1	100.0%	18	100.0%

$x^2 = 2.720$ df: 4   p = 0.606   n = 18

Table 8: Employees and Political Control

Number of Employees	Labour		Independent		Liberal/Democrat		Any Coalition		Total	
Increased	6	54.5%	2	66.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	47.1%
Stayed the Same	3	27.3%	1	33.3%	1	100.0%	1	50.0%	6	35.3%
Decreased	2	18.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	3	17.6%
Total	11	100.0%	3	100.0%	1	100.0%	2	100.0%	2	100.0%

$x^2 = 5.194$ df: 6   p = 0.519   n = 17

Table 9: Future Importance of EU and Political Control

EU Importance	Labour		Independent		Liberal/Democrat		Any Coalition		Total	
More Important	5	45.5%	1	33.3%	1	100.0%	3	75.0%	10	52.6%
Stay the Same	5	45.5%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	1	25.0%	7	36.8%
Less Important	1	9.1%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	10.5%
Total	11	100.0%	3	100.0%	1	100.0%	4	100.0%	19	100.0%

$x^2 = 3.909$ df: 6   p = 0.689   n = 19

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