

Negotiated Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration Child and Young People's Panel on Europe Briefing for MPs

4 December 2018

Children in Scotland and Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), have been supporting the Children and Young People's Panel on Europe, funded by the Scottish Government to ensure that the views and perspectives of children and young people on Brexit inform decision-making processes. The Panel consists of 19 members aged 8-19 years. All Panel members were too young to vote in the EU referendum.

Since August 2018, the Panel has been exploring the effect exiting the European Union could have on children and young people. This briefing outlines their key areas of concern and recommendations.

As supporting organisations, we believe these recommendations are important for all MPs to consider when taking part in the debates on the negotiated Withdrawal Agreement and subsequent vote.

The Panel identified the following five areas as of primary importance to children and young people in their relationship with Europe:

- **EU funding**
- **Opportunities to work, study and travel in other countries**
- **The economy, trade and jobs**
- **Rights**
- **Uncertainty**

The Panel has discussed these topics as a group, with support from a variety of experts, and has to date agreed recommendations on the first three topics. Their recommendations on rights and uncertainty will be published in an additional briefing.

Key questions for the debate on the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration

By raising their concerns in the Withdrawal Agreement debate you can give voice to those too young to have a say in the EU referendum, but who will live with the consequences of Brexit the longest. We encourage MPs to ask the following questions during the debates:

- **How will our ability to replace or restore funding for children's and youth services and ERASMUS+ be affected by the proposed Agreement?**
- **How will opportunities for children and young people to work, study and travel in EU countries be affected by the proposed Agreement?**
- **How will the economy, trade and jobs be affected by the proposed Agreement and Political Declaration?**
- **In relation to trade, how will workers' rights, human rights, food and product safety standards and the environment be affected by the proposed Agreement and Political Declaration?**

Answers to the above questions given during the debate shall be communicated to Panel members.

Summary of panel recommendations for decision-makers

1. EU Funding

The Panel is concerned about funding for projects and services after the UK exits the EU. They recognise the importance to their health, wellbeing and learning of clubs, and other projects that provide support to disadvantaged groups that have received funding from the EU. The Panel is troubled by the lack of discussion about the EU funding received by other children and young people-related projects. They want reassurance that all these services will continue to receive money from the UK and Scottish governments should the UK leave the EU.

The Panel also recognises the importance of schemes such as Erasmus+ for giving young people opportunities to travel and develop. They are pleased to see a continued commitment to Erasmus+ by the UK Government but are particularly keen to see targeted funding to support people who may not be able to access opportunities like Erasmus+.

- **We ask MPs to consider how our ability to replace or restore funding for children's and youth services and ERASMUS+ will be affected by the proposed Agreement.**

Recommendations on EU Funding:

Continued contribution to Erasmus+ by the UK and Scottish governments. This will allow young people to study, volunteer and participate in youth work projects in Europe and allow young people from Europe to study, volunteer and participate in youth work projects in the UK.

Create an extra grant fund for young people from certain backgrounds to give them access to extra money to participate in Erasmus+. Giving money based on need will support young people from more deprived backgrounds to access extra money to support them to take part.

Ensure all youth projects and services that currently receive funding from the EU continue to receive funding. Whatever the outcome of negotiations, the services that support children and young people must continue to receive funding.

2. Opportunities to work, study and travel

The Panel is concerned that it will become more difficult to work, study and travel in EU countries after Brexit. Panel members are also worried that stricter visa rules may cause issues for families separated across the EU and that a tighter system restricting others from working in the UK could damage the NHS.

The Withdrawal Agreement's proposals on citizen's rights goes some way to addressing the Panel's concerns about families being separated. However, we are as yet unsure of the system by which UK citizens will travel in the EU. The Agreement at this stage does not answer concerns about lost experiences and opportunities. The Panel would like to see measures taken to widen opportunities to work, study and travel in other countries so that all children and young people can experience the benefits of this.

- **We ask MPs to consider how the proposed Agreement will impact on the opportunities children and young people have to work, study and travel in EU countries and whether it addresses concerns they have in this area.**

Recommendations on Opportunities to Work, Study and Travel:

Visas should not be required for travel inside the European Union; this must be supported by continued co-operation on security to ensure that we are safe from crime. It is important to make

sure children, young people and their families can still travel inside the EU if we leave. However, this should not mean we are less safe.

If visas are introduced for travel inside the European Union they should be cheap so that everyone can afford them. It is important that all children, young people and families have the opportunity to travel in the EU. No-one should be priced out of purchasing a visa.

If there are going to be changes to travel rules, the UK and Scottish governments must publish clear and simple information about what these are so that children and young people know what's happening. Children and young people need to have clear information about what changes there will be to their opportunities to travel.

3. The Economy, Trade and Jobs

The Panel has raised a range of concerns about how exiting the EU could impact on the economy, trade and jobs. They have been clear that workers' rights need to be protected and expanded on if we leave the EU. They have particular concerns about health and safety at work and people being forced to work long hours. They identified that longer working hours may have a particularly negative impact on parents and families.

The Panel also wants to retain close trade links with the EU as a very important trading partner. This is an area where the Panel is conflicted. Members saw the importance of the UK making its own trade deals with the rest of the world. However, this did not have enough support to become an agreed recommendation. You should consider how the UK and Scotland can trade closely with the EU and the rest of the world.

The Panel also thinks it is vital that all future trade deals protect food standards, animal welfare, human rights and the environment. Ensuring protection in this area is of paramount importance and likely to be affected by the course we decide now.

- **We ask MPs to consider how the proposed Agreement will impact on the Panel's concerns around the Economy, Trade and Jobs and to propose that future decisions about the economy protect rights, increase wages and ensure high standards for the environment, food safety and animal welfare.**

Recommendations on the Economy, Trade and Jobs:

The UK Government should keep all workers' rights that the EU gives to workers. The Children and Young People's Panel on Europe thinks it is important for people to be happy, healthy and safe at work. The Panel wants Scotland to be a world leader in the way workers are treated.

Scotland (and the rest of the UK) should retain strong trade links with the EU. The EU has 500 million consumers living in it and the Panel thinks it is important that the UK can still sell its products to the EU easily and buy things from the EU easily.

The UK Government should make sure that all future trade deals ensure high food quality standards. The Children and Young People's Panel on Europe does not want food to be able to be mistreated with chemicals while it is being transported as this can make it unsafe.

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