

Summary

Introduction

Every second year, SCVO conducts a major 'state of the sector' survey, which aims to gauge the mood, concerns and hopes of the third sector in Scotland. Following the decision for the UK to leave the European Union, uncertainty and a lack of clarity as to what leaving the EU means has caused concern within the sector, particularly with regards to the movement of people, human rights, the economy and medical research. There is also a growing unease within the sector that the 'people aspect' of the debate is being side-lined in favour of a dry, hard-nosed, business emphasis. It is SCVO's view that Europe represents far more than this and that the Third Sector can help to articulate a different and more engaging narrative. In view of the ongoing debate surrounding Scotland's place in Europe, SCVO included additional survey questions to find out more about the view of Scotland's third sector on the EU debate. The survey was completed by 400 third sector representatives and below we outline key findings from the responses to the questions on Brexit. 06 February 2017

Full survey findings

1. Impact of leaving EU

- **86%** felt that leaving the EU would have a negative impact on the **Scottish Economy**
- **81%** felt that leaving the EU would have a negative impact on **Poverty & Social Exclusion**
- **80%** felt that leaving the EU would have a negative impact on **Human Rights & Equality**

2. From your organisation's perspective, do you think that the UK's departure from the European Union will bring about any significant positive opportunities?

- **6%** thought it would bring about significant positive opportunities
- **57%** thought it would not bring about any significant positive opportunities
- **37%** were neutral or unable to say.

3. How important do you think it is to have the following issues kept high on the agenda

- **88%** said it was important or very important to focus on **Investment in areas of deprivation**
- **81%** said it was important or very important to focus on **Human Rights/Workers Rights**
- **70%** said it was important or very important to focus on **Climate Change/Environment**

4. EU policy priorities have generally been a good thing for the voluntary and community sector in Scotland.

- **68%** either agree or agree strongly that EU policy priorities have generally been a good thing for the voluntary and community sector in Scotland.

5. European Networks

39% of Scottish charities are, or have previously been, part of European networks, projects, collaborations or learning exchanges. Commenting, one charity said:

"The withdrawal from EU will have immediate impact on networks as it's the removal of a shared infrastructure"

6. What actions or guarantees do you think the third sector should be asking for?

- "Guarantees human rights will not be affected."
- "A move away from short term project funding to secure core funding to enable longer term planning and ensure ongoing support of beneficiaries."
- "Support from government for collaborative projects with other parts of Europe."
- "Resources to ensure services are equipped to meet the needs of those who may find themselves in a crisis as Brexit moves from transition to reality."
- "It is important that our voice is heard - loud and clear- as our work is interwoven into public policy; the economy; the environment etc. We should be confident - advocating for the vulnerable in our society - proposing solutions that come from a strength of common/shared beliefs."
- "More funding to be ring-fenced so that local authorities can't divert money into other projects."
- "More funding directed towards preventing issues rather than solving them."
- "Continued involvement in the European Medicines Agency; continued adherence to EU tendering rules; contribution to the running costs of EU umbrella organisations."

Conclusion

It is evident from the survey findings that Scotland's Third Sector organisations understand the importance of the EU to the overall strength of our economy and how this will ultimately impact upon voluntary organisation. With free movement, human rights, the environment, collaboration, learning and equalities all on the table, we feel that a greater exploration of these themes would help to grow and solidify public support for continued Scottish cooperation with European institutions, organisations and neighbours. Whilst SCVO supports the Scottish Government's ambition to achieve a bespoke deal for Scotland, we believe that contingency planning must be made for a scenario whereby this is unachievable. In the event of Scotland being involved in a 'hard Brexit', we believe the economic shock will push many of the least well off in our society in to even greater hardship – which will ultimately lead to a rise in demand for the services provided by Third Sector organisations. It is therefore SCVO's view that communities must be resilient enough to withstand the impact of any rise in inflation and subsequent fall in living standards and we look forward to working with the Scottish Government to ensure this is realised.

Contact

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About us

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the national body representing the third sector. There are over 45,000 voluntary organisations in Scotland involving around 138,000 paid staff and approximately 1.3 million volunteers. The sector manages an income of £4.9 billion. SCVO works in partnership with the third sector in Scotland to advance our shared values and interests. We have over 1,600 members who range from individuals and grassroots groups, to Scotland-wide organisations and intermediary bodies. As the only inclusive representative umbrella organisation for the sector SCVO:

- has the largest Scotland-wide membership from the sector – our 1,600 members include charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations of all shapes and sizes
- our governance and membership structures are democratic and accountable - with an elected board and policy committee from the sector, we are managed by the sector, for the sector
- brings together organisations and networks connecting across the whole of Scotland
- SCVO works to support people to take voluntary action to help themselves and others, and to bring about social change.