



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

International Relations: Parliamentary travel

By correspondence

Reference: SPCB (2023) Paper 53

Executive summary

1. The Scottish Parliament Corporate Body is invited to consider and approve forthcoming overseas parliamentary travel. Prior approval for the travel and other costs of overseas visits – in accordance with paragraphs 62 to 64 of Section 2 of the Code of Conduct - the travel and other costs of a visit which are wholly met by the SPCB, or are approved by the SPCB prior to the visit, is exempt from registration as an overseas visit in the Register of Interests of Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Issues and options

CPA annual conference

2. The annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will take place in Accra, Ghana, from 30 September- 6 October 2023. The 66th annual conference will bring together over 500 Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and decision makers from across the Commonwealth for this unique conference and networking opportunity. The theme of the conference this year is “The Commonwealth Charter 10 Years On: Values and Principles for Parliaments to Uphold” and there will be a broad conference theme of scrutiny of Parliamentarians and the overall public trust deficit in Parliaments. The conference will also include workshops on:
 - The Threat of Terrorism to Statehood – the Role of Parliament.
 - Gender quotas in Parliament – a means to an end?
 - What does sustainable trade and economic development mean for small jurisdictions?
 - Youth Roundtable – Role of the Commonwealth in international security and peacebuilding.
 - Environmental approaches in tackling energy poverty.

- 20 Years of the Latimer House Principles on the Separation of Powers: is it working?
 - The Commonwealth Charter: A Charter for all human rights, or just some?
 - E-Parliaments: An effective mechanism for intersectional diversity and equitable public engagement?
3. Both Members (Kaukab Stewart MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP) will participate in several of these workshops as well as wider conference discussions such as the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and network and the CPA Executive Committee (of which Stuart McMillan MSP is a member). In addition, as Convener of the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee Kaukab will be a panellist on the workshop “The Commonwealth Charter: A Charter for all human rights, or just some?”. Furthermore, during the conference bilateral meetings with Members across the Commonwealth have been set up for both Kaukab Stewart MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP to discuss committee and parliamentary business and share best practices.

Governance

4. The SPCB will recall that, within the International Strategy which it agreed in September 2021, there is a new requirement for the International Relations Office (IRO) to outline to the SPCB why the visit is in person (as opposed to virtual) and the travel options and environmental impact considered by the delegation.
5. The CPC offers a unique opportunity for delegates to engage with counterparts across the world and to promote the work of the Scottish Parliament. The conference is not offered virtually and as such Members need to be there in person in order to take part. Furthermore, both Members will take part in meetings, workshops and bilateral meetings to discuss the work of the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee (Stuart), Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee (Kaukab) and the work of the Convener’s Group (both).
6. Due to time constraints air travel between Edinburgh and Accra is the only realistic option. The CO2e footprint pp is 2.46 tonnes (return per person).

Resource implications

7. The estimated costs for the visit including flights, visas, accommodation, and appropriate incidental expense for both MSPs and the Secretary of the CPA Scotland Branch (from the International Relations Office) totals approximately £12,300. Note: the IRO can claim back some travel and

accommodation costs from the CPA for both Members so the cost is likely to be reduced to £9,300.

Publication Scheme

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

Decision

9. The SPCB is invited to consider the above travel and approve the details of the travel and the associated costs for Stuart McMillan MSP and Kaukab Stewart MSP. In accordance with paragraphs 62 to 64 of Section 2 of the Code of Conduct, the travel and other costs of a visit which are wholly met by the SPCB, or are approved by the SPCB prior to the visit, is exempt from registration as an overseas visit in the Register of Interests of Members of the Scottish Parliament.

10. The IRO will then notify the Members concerned they do not need to register this travel.

International Relations Office

August 2023